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THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

AND ITS ORDINANCES

BY

WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, D.D. F.R.S.

LATE DEAN OF CHICHESTER

EDITED BY

THE REV. WALTER HOOK

RECTOR OF PORLOCK

IN TWO VOLUMES : VOLUME I.

LONDON

RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET

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1876

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PREFACE.

Of the Sermons contained in these two volumes, all with but one exception (No. XIV.) have before been published. But as they were preached at different times of the Author's life, and under particular circumstances; as, moreover, their circulation was to some extent confined to the parishes in which he laboured, it has been considered expedient to republish them in a collected form.

They are now arranged under four general heads:

I. The Character and Authority of the Church of England.

II. The Offices of the Church of England.

III. The Duty of Toleration.

IV. The Errors of Romanism.

Within these general heads, the Sermons have been placed according to the time at which they were preached or published.

It may be interesting to remark that the first Sermon in this collection was preached in the year 1822, when the Author was a Deacon and only twenty-four years of age. On all who heard the sermon a great

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and favourable impression was made, and it was in consequence of a very urgent request that it was printed. To the principles therein set forth, the Author remained firm throughout his life; and it will be observed from the subsequent Sermons, that, in the controversy which followed the publication of the 'Tracts for the Times,' he never deviated from his course, and became, in that wonderful phase of the Church of England, the champion of the 'via media.'

While he entered with his usual fervour and zeal into the controversies of the day, the work of his parish was carried on with equal energy, and it is well known with what success. It is proposed to issue a third volume of his Sermons of a more particularly pastoral and parochial character. Those who remember the services in the parish church at Leeds when he was Vicar, will know how much those sermons were appreciated by the vast congregations which were there wont to assemble; and it is in consequence of the request of many old parishioners that a volume of his parochial Sermons will be published.

I must not omit to thank Mr. HARRISON, of Leeds, for allowing those sermons which were originally printed by his firm to be republished.

W. H.

PORLOCK.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

SERMON		PAGE
I.	THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, INDEPENDENTLY OF ITS CONNECTION WITH THE STATE 2 Pm 1:13	1
II.	THE CATHOLICISM OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH AND ITS BRANCHES 1 Cor 12:26-7 . . .	14
III.	HEAR THE CHURCH Mt 18:17 . . .	40
IV.	A CALL TO UNION ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION Acts 7:26 . . .	60
V.	THE CHURCH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT 1 Pm 3:15	98
VI.	THE CHURCH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT Isa 49:23 .	115
VII.	'SHE LOVED MUCH' Lk 7:47. . .	136
VIII.	'THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT' Mt 9:20 . .	158
IX.	THE DUTY OF CONTENDING FOR THE TRUTH Mt 10:34-41	181
X.	THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH 2 Thes 2:15 .	209
XI.	TRADITION Jer 6:16	233
XII.	'I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE' Rom 11:13 . .	253
XIII.	'OUR HOLY AND OUR BEAUTIFUL HOUSE.' Isa 64:11	279

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SERMON		PAGE
XIV.	'LET ALL THINGS BE DONE DECENTLY AND IN ORDER' .	296
XV.	THE BAPTISMAL OFFICES . . .	314
XVI.	CONFIRMATION	339
XVII.	THE HOLY EUCHARIST . . .	360

Erratum.

In Sermon IV., pp. 63, 69, *for* see note at the end of the volume, *read* see note at the end of the second volume.

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SERMON I.

THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, INDEPENDENTLY OF ITS CONNECTION WITH THE STATE.

'*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.*'—2 Tim. i. 13.

PLACED in a situation so new to me, and under circumstances which necessarily awaken the deepest regret, that he to whom every feeling of pious affection and gratitude is due from me, should be incapacitated from discharging an office for which he is so eminently qualified *—surrounded by those who have long and successfully laboured in the vineyard, into which I have been so lately called, and in the presence of our spiritual visitor, whose pious and learned labours have been the guide of my youth, it would argue a serious defect of that humility, which ought especially to mark the outset of a Christian minister, were I to assume anything which could be thought to approach the tone of authority, or even the language of admonition. We are all, however, embarked in one great common cause,

[Preached at Newport on July 3, 1822, on the occasion of the Bishop's visitation.]

* The duty devolved upon the author in consequence of his father's indisposition.

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in which conscience rather than the judgment of men must be taken as the criterion of our duties; and humility itself must not be an impediment in the way of the least gifted individual among us, when called upon to take up the cross, and to follow in the steps of his divine Master.

If it be at all times the duty of a minister of the Gospel to watch over and to defend the sanctuary of his holy faith, it is more imperatively so at the present period, when our apostolical Church—I grieve to say it—has to contend for its authority and discipline, within as well as without its pale. It is a time when even the oldest among us must not suffer himself to slumber at his post; but it is the time of all others, for those who are beginning their ministry, to lay firm hold on the horns of the altar, and 'in the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus,' to guard that sanctuary from pollution or profanation.

In proportion as the temporal power of the Church has decreased—and no one acquainted with her canons and constitutions can deny that it has essentially decreased within the last century—it behoves her ministers to preserve the balance, by an increase of spiritual influence. They must labour to render her pure modes of worship, her apostolical usages, and primitive simplicity of doctrine more conspicuous, as the distinctions of an Establishment recede from her.

It is a common but dangerous error, as pernicious to those who are induced by it to desert or oppose the Established Church, as it is subversive of that unity which the Gospel everywhere prescribes, that the

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religion of the State is an engine of mere human contrivance, political in its character, and existing only as an integral part of the institutions of man. It is needless in an assembly like this, to enter into any detailed argument, to prove that the Episcopal Church has existed in regular descent from the apostolical times (gross and idolatrous as were the forms by which it was for a long period overlaid and obscured); and that it would exist in all its vigour and purity, were the State to deprive it of its civil ascendency, and to sever it from the constitution of the country.

This is no gratuitous inference, induced by a too partial view of the subject; it is not even a matter of speculative opinion. The Episcopal Church, as it exists at present, in union with the constitution of this country, has existed, and does continue to exist in the utmost purity, unconnected with, and disjoined from all civil authority. When the hierarchy fell with the kingly government, at the time of the great rebellion, our holy and Episcopal Church still strictly adhered to its rule of faith and worship, and even shone with more than its wonted purity; for it was purged and cleansed of those hollow professors, who, living under its wing, and fostered in its bosom, availed themselves of the breach which laid it open to its persecutors and oppressors; and abandoned it to those only who were its true and faithful disciples. It was purified, not overwhelmed by the waters of adversity.

Our Bishops, indeed, were deprived of the temporal and civil rights which had been vested in them by the ancient constitution of the land; but they remained

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firm in the discharge of their episcopal functions, and in upholding that authority which they had derived in direct descent from the apostolic age.

The Episcopal Church in Scotland was, about the the same period, deprived of its civil ascendency. It was indeed, for a short time, re-invested with power, but at the Revolution in 1688 Presbyterianism was finally established in that part of the British dominions, to the utter exclusion of episcopacy, as the religion of the State, but not as a Church. It remained, where it had formerly stood in splendour—equally firm and dignified, in poverty. Deprived of its temporalities, it not only adhered to the strict rule of its discipline and worship, but displayed a peaceable and loyal character unknown to and unimitated by any other Church, under the probing operation of persecution, as well as depression. Of late years, indeed, this Church has emerged from the shade into which it had been thrown by its oppressors. It is now tolerated; but it is no longer an Establishment, nor can its Bishops claim any temporal power or jurisdiction. Nevertheless, their spiritual authority is as firm, as legitimate, and as truly and unquestionably derived by succession from the Apostles, as that of our own Bishops. 'It is,' in the words of Bishop Horsley, 'a pure, spiritual episcopacy; an order of men, set apart to inspect, and to manage the spiritual affairs of the Church, as a society in itself, totally unconnected with civil government.'

But although the Church of England may boast a perfect independence upon all human institutions, it is, nevertheless, our duty, our bounden duty, to apply

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those means which, under Providence, are supplied for the furtherance of Christian truth and obedience, by the civil ordinances of the State into which she is adopted. We preach with authority, which human sanctions can neither increase nor diminish; but we are no where commanded in the Gospel to reject the subsidiary authority, founded on human institution, when it does not militate against our paramount allegiance to Almighty God. On the contrary, it was foreshown that kings should be 'the nursing fathers'* of the Church of Christ; thus clearly indicating the means of promoting the great ends of Christianity, under the operation of civil sanctions, that is, an Establishment, which, in the Gospel language, is necessary among large bodies of men, to promote and maintain 'the unity of spirit, in the bond of peace.' We do not, therefore, adhere to the Church, because it is an Establishment, but because it is an Establishment founded on the revealed Word of God; and which demands nothing, imposes nothing as necessary to salvation, which may not be read and proved by the Holy Scriptures.

There is an individuality (if I may be allowed the expression) in the Church of England, which belongs to no other established form or mode of Christian worship; and which, whilst it affords an additional evidence of its apostolical character, distinguishes it from all those which have emanated from or are opposed to it.

After the separation of the Eastern and Western

* Isaiah xlix. 23.

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Churches, the latter, or Roman branch, soon ceased to make the Word of God its spiritual guide. Like the later Jews, it was wholly given up to traditions and fables; and the pure light of Christianity could scarcely penetrate through the dense body of superstitious rites and observances which arose out of them. The Romanists maintained, indeed, the foundations of the primitive Church, and the form of Church government was in its principal article preserved. But it was only a form, and the Bible was a sealed book. The Reformation again opened that source of light and life to mankind; but, as in the former instance, although under modes directly opposed, the interpretation of man soon began to supersede the simplicity of the Gospel, and the long dormant remonstrance of the apostle applied in full force, to those who boasted that they were of 'Cephas or Apollos,'—of Luther or Calvin, of Melanchthon or Arminius. The doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope was exploded, but the fallibility of man was still in the ascendant.

The zeal of innovation is no less a distemper of the mind, than the bigotry which blinds us to existing errors. Truth is never found in extremes. And who that reads the works of many of the early reformers on the continent of Europe can trace even the tone of Christianity, in the prosecution of their great scheme of Christian reform? And yet these works have lived; our own loved country, for a time, lay prostrate under the infliction of their doctrines, and they have descended even to our own times, cherished and supported with a zeal that would do honour to a better cause.

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It is not my purpose to enlarge upon this part of my subject, it would open too wide a field of discussion upon such an occasion as the present. And I have only referred to it on account of the illustration it incidentally affords to the peculiar character of the Church of England, as contradistinguished from all the various sects and creeds to which the speculative theology of the early reformers, and their compurgators and imitators in other countries, has given birth.

The Roman Church, from which these men seceded, in common with ourselves, had preserved, I repeat, the foundations of the true Church; and when the rubbish of the superstructure was removed, these appeared fully to view. But instead of reflecting by whom and on whose authority they had been laid, they in their newly awakened zeal revolted from all contact with that which they denounced as being utterly and irremediably defiled. They paused not to reflect, or to compare, or to bring what was still sound to the test of the apostolical ordinances, but hastened with their various followers and proselytes to dig new foundations, and to erect new churches; as if the Church of Christ were many, and not one, single, holy, and Catholic. Hence those feuds and divisions which sectarianism has engendered, and entailed upon future generations; and which, without reference to the effects upon our own Church, but comparing them only with each other, have obviously and fatally broken that unity of spirit which is the essence of Christianity, and the very bond of peace. Was the Bible a sealed book to these men?

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Had they never read, and do they never read the apostolic exhortation uttered in the fervency of inspired zeal? 'I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Is Christ divided?' *

Uninspired man can never safely be made the depositary of power, without hazard to himself as well as to others; I mean that power which gives him a positive, unquestioned, and uncontrolled influence over the persons or the consciences of men. There is a leaven of humanity which will mix with his best intentions, and give a colour imperceptibly to actions, which in their native hue and character he would have shuddered, perhaps, to contemplate. We perceive the aspiration after precedence and distinction among the very apostles of our blessed Saviour, until they were filled with that spirit which afterwards gave them—with the power to work even miracles—Christian humility, which shrank from all imputed merit in themselves.

The founders of the various sects which were quickly generated upon the great secession from the Roman Church, each, in order to increase the number of his proselytes, influenced by his own peculiar prejudices, or eager to display his zeal by some specific character or tenet, which should separate and distinguish his authority from that of his increasing rivals, became a self-interpreter of the newly opened

* 1 Cor. i. 10–13.

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Scriptures; and dogmatised with scarcely more moderation than the Pope of Rome himself.

Thus in the two extremes the same errors prevailed, qualified on the side of reform indeed, in some measure, by free discussion, which will always preclude the absolute suppression of truth; but the interpretation, and the doctrines deduced from it by the reformed leader, were as implicitly adopted in the creed, and were little less imperative upon the consciences of his followers, than the Bulls and Decretals of the Roman hierarchy upon those who still adhered to the ancient superstition. As these tenets differed according to the various temperaments and habits of the several preachers, schisms inevitably arose, and the pale of Christianity became again narrowed and circumscribed by mortal man! Salvation was scarcely allowed to those who transgressed the prescribed boundaries; and bigotry and intolerance were found to exist far beyond the precincts and limits of papal jurisdiction.

But how differently was the Reformation carried on in this country! And how wise the means employed, to prevent this interposition of private passions and intemperate zeal in the establishment of a Christian Church! The old foundations, I repeat, were still visible. These were cleared and cleansed, in order that the simple structure for which they were originally prepared might be re-edified. This was not effected by one man, nor on the views or authoritative dicta of any separate class or denomination of Christians, but by the whole body of eminent eccle-

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siastics then existing in the Christian community of this country; and by a succession of wise and experienced counsellors, who searched the Scriptures in simplicity of spirit, and with that singleness of heart which prayed for, and relied upon Divine assistance in fixing, according to the clear and obvious interpretation of Scripture, the glory due to 'God on high,' and upon earth that 'peace and good-will towards man' which had been announced to him in the voice of angels!

This it is which gives an individuality—a character unknown to all other churches—to that under which, by the blessing of Providence, we have been born and nurtured, and conducted on our way, to the blessed hope of everlasting life.

In this happy Reformation it was not proposed to open new sources of speculative inquiry on the nature of Church government; but, as its name bespeaks, to render it conformable to ancient, known, and ascertainable principles, upon which it was primitively established; to cleanse and purify it from the alloy with which it had been debased, not to cast it into the fire, to take a new shape, or to subject it again to the plastic hand of designing or fanciful theorists. To restore, not to destroy, was the pious and noble maxim of our Reformers.

The structure of the Church, thus re-edified upon the primitive principles of Christianity, arose an object of respect and veneration! Without extraneous ornament, it still preserved a simple dignity sufficient to secure it from profanation, and to direct, not to

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divert, the attention of the creature in his communion with his Creator.

Such is the Church—whether in a state of union with, or of separation from, the civil constitution of the country. Such, I say, is the Church; and such were the inducements which obtained for her the protection of the State! And that she has not forfeited the pledge originally given of her perseverance in the pure model to which she had been reformed, may be asserted in the face of her most open and avowed opponents. No objection is urged against her which was not brought by the earliest seceders from her worship; and so far from any undue power having been usurped or attempted on her part, during the progress of nearly three centuries, she has surrendered, perhaps, too many of her chartered rights, and scarcely retains a privilege which is not equally shared by those who are most hostile to her interests.

She has, then, more than redeemed her pledge; for while, on the one hand, she has preserved her faith pure and uncontaminated, she has so infused her mild and moderate principles into the civil constitution to which she is united, that we may challenge the whole world to produce an instance, in past or present time, of the administration of the laws and of justice, so consistent with morality, with strict rectitude and the principles of rational liberty, as under the truly Protestant Government of this country.

That such a Church merits, and has proved that she merits, the sanction of the State, we may boldly assert; but if it were possible to suppose that the civil

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Government could sustain and survive a separation from an ally so interwoven and bound up with all her institutions—if such a convulsion should ever overwhelm the Church, and leave, contrary to all experience and probability, the State in security—we may rest assured that, although in poverty, destitute of worldly honour, and stripped of her endowments, she would exist, and exist as purely apostolical as when first established through the labours of her great and pious founders, and sealed in the blood of her martyrs.

Well then may we glory in being ministers of such a Church! not in vain pride of man's glory, but as the servants of the Lord, elected into the holy sanctuary of His Word, to maintain His ordinances in their primitive purity, to make known His holy will and commandments, and by our own obedience to illustrate the beauty and influence of His divine precepts. No spiritual pride can enter into the heart of the sincere Churchman, no private passions may be permitted to mingle with his duty and allegiance; he is the servant, not the controller of the laws he has sworn to obey; nor is he at liberty to compromise between his conscience and that allegiance, by adhering to the form and rejecting the spirit of the institution. 'He that is not with us is against us!' and what term is there sufficiently strong or emphatic to designate the turpitude of receiving her hire, without a sincere motive and determination to fulfil the ordinances of our holy Church? It is not for me to fix this mark; but it may not be amiss, in conclusion, to show that as errors of this nature have long existed, under different aspects,

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so the persevering and steady adherence of true and faithful ministers to 'the form of sound words in faith and love,' has hitherto preserved us, and—under God's mercy—will continue to preserve us, from their domination.

'Of all sorts of enemies that our Church hath,' said the learned South, a century ago, 'there is none so deadly, so pernicious, and likely to prove so fatal, as the conforming Puritan. He is,' he continues, 'one who lives by the altar, but turns his back upon it; one who catches at the preferments of the Church, but hates the orders and discipline of it; one who in the midst of his conformity thinks of a turn of State which may draw in one of the Church too; and, accordingly, is very careful not to overshoot his game, but to stand right and fair in case a wished-for change should bring fanaticism again into fashion, which it is more than possible he secretly desires, and does the utmost he can to promote and bring about.'*

* South's Works, 1717. Vol. V. Sermon XII. on Galat. xi. 5.

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SERMON II.

THE CATHOLICISM OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH AND ITS BRANCHES.

'*Whether one member suffer all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.*'—1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

DEEPLY impressed with the importance of the solemn office for the celebration of which we are this day assembled, and equally aware of mine own unworthiness, as a simple Presbyter, to discuss the great questions which naturally arise out of it in the presence of so many right reverend Fathers of the Church, it is with sincere humility and diffidence that I take upon me a duty, to the performance of which I am capable of bringing little more than that fervent zeal which such an event is calculated to call forth in the breast of every true servant of our holy Catholic Church. Heartily, however, as humbly I pray unto Him, 'who worketh great marvels,' to send down upon this whole congregation such a portion of the 'healthful spirit of His grace,' as may supply all deficiencies on the part of the creature, and bring our designs and labours to a happy conclusion, to the honour and glory of the Creator.

[Preached at the consecration of Bishop Luscombe, in the Episcopal Church, at Stirling, on Sunday, March 20, 1825.]

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In contemplating a measure which forcibly brings back to our recollection the primitive periods of the Church of Christ, and awakens the memory of those events which have marked its career from the first mission of the Apostles down to the present hour, we are necessarily reminded of the distinguishing features by which, and by which alone, the true apostolic and Catholic character of it may be traced.

In the regular procession of events first principles too frequently become obscured, or are only referred to as they partially appear to justify a latitude of interpretation. In an age of professing liberality especially, men are apt to be fascinated by words, and to merge the distinctive character—to lose sight feature by feature of truth itself—in the prevailing mode of generalising principles, as well as systems. Thus by an error, venial perhaps as far as concerns the ignorant multitude, but criminal in those who either through prejudice, or for the purpose of deluding others, foster and extend it—every sect, every shade and denomination of dissent or departure from the institutions of the Apostles and the primitive Church, are comprehended equally with the most rigid and conscientious adherence to them, under the general head and title of the Catholic Church.

In such an assembly as this I need not insist upon the impropriety—to use no harsher term—of such a general classification; but it may not be considered irrelevant, if in discussing the merits of our present undertaking, in order to anticipate misunderstanding, and to guard against misrepresentation, we explain distinctly and clearly what we mean by the Catholic

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Church; and hence endeavour to show how perfectly in accordance with its principles and objects is the purpose now contemplated by the pious and venerable governors of this pure and legitimate branch of it.

That the Church of Rome has unjustly arrogated to herself an exclusive claim to the title of Catholic—that name so dear to all who are imbued with the love of primitive Christianity—has been too satisfactorily proved by a succession of the ablest divines, and, indeed, is too self-evident to need any discussion upon the present occasion. We shall rather direct our observations against the error, not only of those who dissent from our apostolic Church, but even of too many careless professors within its pale—who, ignorant or regardless of the primitive institutions of Christianity—the restoration to which was the object of our Reformation—content themselves with a literal interpretation of this designation of the one true Church, and thus predicate it indiscriminately of all believers.

That their principle of interpretation is erroneous a little consideration will serve to show. Ascertaining καθολικός to mean universal, they demand where is to be found an universal Church. They perceive the disagreement which exists with respect both to doctrines and ceremonies among the various religious establishments throughout the world, and finding, strictly speaking, no satisfactory answer to the question, they at once assume the fact, that under the general title of the Catholic Church must necessarily be included every sect and denomination of professing Christians, however different in doctrine, in discipline or even in faith, from

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the primitive Church. But is this a just or legitimate mode of interpretation? Is it the mode of interpretation, with which anyone who comes to the consideration of the subject will be satisfied? If in the study of the literature, the philosophy, or the political economy of the ancients, we were to meet with a technical expression or a term of art, should we rest contented with the imperfect notions conveyed by either, in their first and literal sense? Should we not rather refer to the writings of the poet, the philosopher, and the politician, and adopt the term, whether agreeable or not to its strict etymological signification, in the precise sense to which it had been restricted by them? This surely is consonant with every principle applicable to the investigation of truth, and must, in justice, be adopted in analyzing any question connected with the first and greatest of all truths—'the reason of the faith which is in us.'

When, therefore, we adopt and daily repeat the creed of the early Christians, we are surely bound to ascertain not only the meaning of their words, but the precise sense in which they were used, and in which those holy Fathers intended that we should receive them.

By this test, then, we are prepared to abide; and we may, without presumption, challenge the opponents of our interpretation to point out one instance in which the term Catholic is applied by the ancients in the indefinite and indiscriminate manner for which they contend. They will invariably find it used, for a purpose directly opposed to that which they profess. They will

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find it used, to speak logically, as a word of the second intention, to distinguish the one true and Apostolic Church—the Church which was established at Jerusalem by the preaching of St. Peter, and existing through all ages the same by the succession of its Bishops—from the various sects, heresies, and schisms which even then brought scandal upon the name of Christians. 'Christianus mihi nomen, Catholicus cognomen,' the former to distinguish him from the heathen, the latter from the heretics, was the motto not of Pacian alone, but of every orthodox member of the Church.

If earlier than the age of Irenæus the distinction is not so clearly marked, it is only because the errors of the first and the former part of the second century were so gross in their nature that they could scarcely lay claim to the common term of Christian, and that, consequently, the line of demarkation between Churchman and Heretic was too clearly ascertained to require that nice distinction which afterwards became necessary when Schism as well as Heresy divided the believers in the name of Christ. But to the writings of Irenæus, Tertullian, and St. Cyprian,—the polar star of the Ecclesiastical Antiquary,—we might, with safety, appeal, for the fullest proof of our assertion; were it not amply sufficient for the object we have in view to ascertain the meaning which was attached to the term by those who first adopted it in the Creed.

Although the article concerning the Catholic Church had been inserted in many of the Oriental Creeds at the beginning of the fourth century, and although the term itself had been applied to the

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Church, as we shall presently see, from the apostolic age; it did not form part of any of those creeds which are retained by us, until the Council of Constantinople added it to the Nicene. Now it would be perfectly fair to infer that the very circumstance of its insertion in the Creed is sufficient, if not to support our argument, at least to invalidate that to which we are opposed. The design of a Creed is not the expression of all that we believe, but the profession of certain truths which, although denied by some, are maintained by us. There is, consequently, an antithesis to every article. We profess to believe in God the Father, because the Pagan rejects Him; in God the Son, because the Arian blasphemes Him; in God the Holy Ghost, because His personality is denied by the Macedonian. Now, if in the profession of belief in the existence of the Catholic Church, the primitive Christians had intended nothing further than the acknowledgment of the existence of large masses of believers in the name of Christ, scattered over the face of the earth, no one in his senses would have objected to that which was self-evident. To have denied it, would have involved an absurdity too gross for the most weak and illiterate of mankind to have been guilty of; and to have inserted the article in the creed, would, in consequence, have been at least a work of supererogation. But if, on the other hand, they intended, as we maintain, to distinguish by that title the true and Apostolic Church from the different sects of Schismatics and Heretics; then they asserted a fact, against which those sects would vigorously contend, and then, also, we can

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readily account for its adoption in the various Symbols or Creeds of the Church.

But we are not driven to the necessity of drawing our conclusion by inference, or from merely general views of the subject. The article now under consideration, we repeat, was first added to the Creed of Nice, by the Council of Constantinople.* The question, then, is—what was the idea which the Constantinopolitan Fathers intended to convey by the term. This may be answered at once if the authenticity of the seventh Canon of that Council be admitted, and I trust I do not presume too far in affirming that the arguments in its favour are of equal strength, at least with those of its opponents. Now, these Fathers in their seventh Canon make a manifest distinction, between the various Schismatics and Heretics, and 'the Catholic and Apostolic Church of God,' by the appointment of particular ceremonies to be observed by the former upon their admission into this Church,—of which, had they previously been members, there would have been no necessity. And let it be particularly observed that among the Schismatics specified in the seventh Canon,

* The reader is requested to bear in mind, that the clauses which in our Prayer Books succeed the mention of the Holy Ghost, were not *originally* in the Nicene Creed, but added to it, as stated in the text at the Council of Constantinople, in the year 381. It is sometimes maintained that this alteration was made *not* at the *general* Council, but at one holden immediately afterwards at the same place. Without entering into controversy upon this subject, it is sufficient to observe, that—even supposing this to be the case,—since it is agreed on all hands that the same Fathers, (or at all events, the triumphant majority of the previous Council,) acted in both our argument will not be affected by it.

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and alluded to as being without the pale of the Catholic Church, are the Novatians,—the Novatians who differed less from the Church then, than any one sect, whether Calvinistic or Lutheran, differs from it now,—who were, in faith Homo-ousians, and in doctrine Episcopalians. Their only distinguishing characteristic was the uncompromising rigour of their discipline: so that if the Novatians were not considered as members of the Catholic Church, to that high privilege no other sect surely could prefer a claim.

But even admitting the arguments against the authenticity of this Canon to be valid, we are still at no loss to discover the intention of the Constantinopolitan Fathers, since they admitted the Creed and Decrees of the Council of Nice. For although the Nicene Fathers did not insert it as an article of faith, they nevertheless not only applied the term Catholic to the one true Church, in contradistinction to the assemblies of the Heretics, but actually made use of it, in this sense, at the conclusion of their Creed. The original Nicene Creed, as is well known, concludes with an anathema against the Arians, in the name of the 'holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;' of which Church, by a reference to their eighth Canon, it will plainly appear they did not consider either Heretics or Schismatics to be members; since that Canon was expressly framed to legislate for those of the Puritan or Novatian Clergy who might 'come over to the Catholic Church,' *περὶ τῶν ὀνομαζόντων μὲν ἑαυτούς ποτε, προσερχομένων δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ καὶ ἀποστολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, manifestly implying that they did not

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previously belong to it. This is the more remarkable, since the validity of the orders of these Novatian Clergy—who had preserved the episcopal succession, and had among them Bishops regularly consecrated—is, by implication, in this very canon acknowledged.

Enough I trust has been said to establish the sense in which the term Catholic was by the compilers of the Creed applied to the Apostolic Church of our blessed Lord and Saviour. It was evidently used, I repeat, as a word of the second intention to distinguish the true Church from the heretical and schismatical sects. Adopting, therefore, the term in its legitimate and restricted sense, we might now, if the time permitted, enter upon a curious and interesting inquiry concerning its origin. It may be said, indeed, that upon this point nothing can be asserted with any degree of certainty. The testimony of the Fathers is, no doubt, various and conflicting. The later Fathers and particularly St. Augustin, while applying the term in the same restricted sense with ourselves, appear to have believed that it was originally given because 'the Catholic Church was not like the Churches of the heretics confined to certain places and provinces, but enlarged by the splendour of one faith, from the rising up of the sun, to the going down of the same.'* But whether such was its original signification may admit of a doubt. The earliest writer by whom the word has been used is Ignatius, the Apostolic Bishop of Antioch. It occurs, also, twice in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna upon the martyrdom of Poly-

* August. Tom. 10. Serm. de Temp.

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carp, their venerable Prelate. That neither the Church nor Christianity was at that period the universal religion must be apparent to everyone. The name, therefore, must either have been given prophetically, purporting that the one true Church would eventually be the universal one—or might, more probably, have been adopted to distinguish the Christian Church from the Jewish; the one having been confined to a single chosen nation, while the other was destined to spread throughout all the nations of the world. When we consider the disputes which were early prevalent between the Gentile converts and the Judaizing Christians, we can easily conceive the readiness with which the former would adopt a title which proclaimed their liberty as the sons of God.

But whatever may have been the origin of the word, the manner in which it was applied by the Fathers of the Church, and the purpose for which it was used, are palpable and clear—upon the whole, then, I conclude, according to my first position, that, in adopting the Creed of the ancients, we are bound to interpret the articles in the sense in which they were understood by them, and thus to receive the article in question, as applicable wholly and exclusively to that one Church, which—founded on the day of Pentecost by the preaching of St. Peter at Jerusalem—is to exist through all ages the same, by the succession of its ministers in an unbroken line from the Apostolic period.

As a branch of this Church, the Church of England, (from which the Churches of Scotland and of North

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America have derived their succession,) was established: in the middle ages it became not a new Church, but corrupted; and in the sixteenth century it was not made a new Church, but it was reformed. Our Reformers gradually and carefully removed the corruptions by which it was defaced, and brought it to the state in which we find it now.

Resolute against error, yet cautious of innovation, the divines of England consulted Scripture by the light of antiquity. The traditionary comments of the Fathers and the authoritative decrees of the four first general councils were a check upon the presumption and too prevailing error of self-interpretation. Truth, not the spirit of party, animated their councils, μηδ' ὑπερσέβοντες μηδ' ὑποσέβοντες, was their motto. The doctrines which were rejected by them had never been the doctrines of the primitive Church, and while they scrupulously abscinded all that was Popish, they tenaciously adhered to every thing which was Catholic.* Thus

* As the Bishops, both of Scotland and America, have derived their succession through the Bishops of England—the former in the reign of James I. and Charles II., the latter in that of his late Majesty—they have an equal interest in the English Reformation with ourselves. It is impossible to trace the history of the English Reformation, without perceiving the strong desire and constant care of the Reformers, throughout, to reject 'every thing *Popish* and to retain all that was *Catholic*.' To give a few, out of the many instances which might be adduced: in the articles drawn up by Convocation, in the reign of Henry VIII. and signed by the members in 1536 (which was the first real step towards the Reformation), 'all opinions contrary to the Articles of the Creed are condemned, which were of long time past condemned in the Council of Nice, Ephesie, and Chalcedonense, and all others since that time in any part consonant to the same.' In the "Institution of a Christian Man," pub-

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through their agency, under the guidance of Providence, was reformed that Catholic Church for the high

lished in 1537, it is declared, in the notes upon the Creed, 'that heterodoxes condemned in the four first general councils, must be renounced, and the Creed interpreted agreeably to the sense of Scripture and antiquity.' In the Act for the conformity of prayer and the administration of the Sacraments, in the reign of Edward VI. it is expressly stated, that the Bishops and Divines who had been appointed to draw up the reformed Liturgy, 'had been directed to have a regard to the direction of Scripture, and the usages of the primitive Church.' Cranmer, who drew up the answer to the rebels of Cornwall and Devon, in the same reign, states, 'that the practice and belief of the Church of England is agreeable to the decisions of the general councils.' In the Act for recalling the liturgic books, the first book of Edward is declared 'to be agreeable to the order of the primitive Church.' In the letter sent by the Council to the Lady Mary, A.D. 1550, (that part which relates to religion having probably been written by Archbishop Cranmer, assisted by a greater than Cranmer, Bishop Ridley,) it is said, 'that all the Articles of the Creed were professed both by the Romanists and the Church of England men—that the difference lies in the ceremonies, and the use of the Sacraments—that in these particulars the English Reformation has recovered the worship to the directions of Scripture, and the use of the primitive Church.' The reformed preachers, who from prison addressed Philip and Mary, offered to prove their doctrines 'by Catholic principles and authority, by Scripture and antiquity.' Cranmer, at his last trial, and previously to his recantation, declared, 'that he was not only willing to be determined by the sense, but to subscribe the very phrases and terms of the ancients relating to the Eucharist.' Horne in the Conference between the Papists and Reformed at Westminster, at the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, asserts: 'that his party were guided by the practice of the Church for the first five centuries.' Elizabeth herself, in her reply to the foreign powers who applied to her to receive the rejected Bishops, gave, as one of her arguments for refusing their request, 'that no new faith was propagated in England, no religion set up, but that which was commanded by our Saviour, and practised by the primitive Church, and unanimously approved by the Fathers of antiquity.' I shall only further add, that by 1st Eliz. 1. what was adjudged to be heresy by the four first general councils, is

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privilege of belonging to which, on bended knees, and with uplifted hearts, we should pour forth our praises and

allowed to be so by the English statute law. Having thus shown from the commencement of the Reformation in the reign of Henry VIII. to its consummation in that of Queen Elizabeth, that it was merely the design and object of the English Reformers, by abscinding the novelties which popery had introduced, to place the Church in the same situation in which it stood during the primitive ages; we have only to appeal to history for a most triumphant proof of their success.

It has been the boast of the Roman Catholics, and of late years they have upon this ground, appealed with too much success to the feelings of the ignorant, that theirs is the old Church, and ours the new one. That theirs is the old Church, when it is compared with the other Protestant sects,—with the Presbyterians and Independents, we are free to confess,—but that it is not so, when compared with the Church of England, has been, and must always be, maintained by every sound Churchman. What is a new Church? That which adopts or supports novelty of doctrine; not that which, retaining the Episcopal succession, rejects all those doctrines which want the stamp of antiquity. If this definition be correct, we are bold to assert, that ours is the old Church—and the Roman Catholic a new one. Every one of those peculiar tenets which distinguish them from us is a novelty; the charge of novelty we retort upon them. 'Nothing but impudence itself,' says Bishop Bull,* 'nothing but impudence itself, dares affirm that the Scriptures teach or the Primitive Church practise image worship, invocation of saints, the half communion, prayers in a tongue not understood by those who are required to join in them;' and to these we may add transubstantiation, the supremacy of the Pope, and the adoration of the host. It was after enumerating these innovations of the Church of Rome, that Bishop Jewell declared, that 'if any one of his adversaries were able to make good a single proposition amongst them all, either by sufficient declarations of Scripture, or by the testimony of the ancient fathers or councils, he would give up the contest, and declare himself a proselyte.' His ever memorable challenge, in which he defied the Papists to 'bring one sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic doctor or father, or out of any old general council, or any one example of the Primitive

* Vindication, p. 119.

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thanksgivings to the Almighty 'giver of all good things.' We conscientiously believe that this Church thus

Church, in favour of these doctrines for the first 600 years,' has hitherto been unanswered—because it is unanswerable. We might, at the same time, defy the Romanists to show that we have received any doctrine or tenet which was not received by the Catholic Bishops of the Primitive Church. We are justified, therefore, in proclaiming in the words of Bishop Hall: * 'Be it known to all the world, that our Church is only reformed or repaired not made new—there is not one stone of a new foundation laid by us; yea, the old walls stand still, only the overcasting of those ancient stones with untempered mortar of new inventions, displeaseth us; plainly set aside the corruptions, and the Church is the same.'

I will only add, that if it be true, as some persons would have us believe, that the objectionable doctrines of their Church are no longer holden by the Roman Catholics, all controversy is at an end—all bone of contention taken away—let them set aside their corruptions—let them cast off their bonds of human superstitions, and the Churches are the same. That there would be no backwardness on the part of the Church of England, to lend her assistance to any part of the Romish Church, which might be willing to renounce all, or even most of its errors, is sufficiently proved by the friendly correspondence which was entered into, on that subject, between Archbishop Wake and the historian Du Pin.† But the fact is, that their objectionable doctrines are not renounced by the great body of the Roman Catholics; and it is as absurd, as it is useless, to seek to ascertain the doctrines of a Church or Sect, from any singular opinions which may be entertained by a few individuals, however exalted in station or distinguished in character. By the law and the testimony—by their canons and ritual are they known—until those be altered, their Church must remain what it was made by the Council of Trent.

Much as this note has been extended beyond my original purpose, it is impossible to conclude without observing, that if the design of our Reformers in renouncing Popery was to return to true Catholicism, and if we are commanded, as we undoubtedly are, by the canons, to preach nothing but what is agreeable to the Catholic Fathers, and the Ancient Bishops,—they will be the truest and most

* Quoted by Bishop Bull, 'Vindication,' p. 164.

† See the Appendix to Mosheim.

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restored to primitive purity,—restored in countries, wherein it is by law established, to the state in which it existed in the days of Constantine,—restored in countries like this* and America where it is simply tolerated, to the state in which it existed in those still purer ages, which boast of a Cyprian, an Irenæus, an Ignatius, even of the Apostles themselves—is that true Catholic Church, 'against which, (He, whose words shall remain firm, though heaven and earth pass away, has declared it,) 'the gates of hell shall not prevail.'

Under this view of the subject, we shall easily perceive our relative position with respect to the leading sects of the Reformation on one hand, and the Romanists on the other. To both we can hold out the hand of Christian charity, with neither can we enter into entire communion. We consider the former in error for having seceded from that Church which required reformation, but which we were forbidden, as the institution of our Saviour and His Apostles, to overthrow; the latter we regard as a branch of that Catholic Church, to which ourselves belong—but a branch so scathed by time, and cankered in the sap,

orthodox Churchmen, who devote their time to the study, not of the continental Reformers, of Luther, Melanchthon, or Calvin, but of primitive Christianity—'nequaquam hujus temporis consuetudinem, sed veterum Scriptorum auctoritatem sequentes.'—It would have been better perhaps, inasmuch as it would have explained the true character of our pretensions, had our Church in Scotland and America assumed the title of the *Reformed Catholic Church*, instead of that by which it is now designated—the Episcopal Church.

* It is to be remembered that this sermon was preached in Scotland.

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that we dare not rest upon it our hopes of salvation.* The one, in short, we censure for having revolutionized instead of reformed, the other for pertinaciously defending instead of correcting errors—unknown to antiquity —the creatures of barbarism, ignorance and superstition. But as long as they continue to hold the doctrine of the holy undivided Trinity, we regard neither the one nor the other with feelings of severity.

Our fellow Protestants, although on many points erroneous, worship the same Father, Son, and Blessed Spirit with ourselves, they confide on the merits of the same crucified Redeemer; they look for, and will, we trust, through His mercy, receive the graces of the Holy Spirit; if not in all their fulness, yet so as to secure the salvation of their souls. The same charitable feelings we would extend to the Church of Rome. That the Church of Rome, amidst all its errors, still retains faith sufficient for salvation—that amidst all its corruptions it still cherishes something which is pure—that amidst all its superstitions it still points out to the sinner the road of virtue, and the path to heaven—that it still can boast among its members, many who, however mistaken in their doctrines, are to be esteemed for their virtues, and honoured for their piety, God forbid that the most devoted Protestant should deny. But at the same time with these charitable, Christian, and liberal sentiments, with respect to other communions, our Church has ever united the most uncompromising firmness in maintaining the doctrines of its own. We have a duty to perform

* The same may be said of the Greek Church

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to ourselves, and above all to our God, paramount to that even which we owe to our neighbour. Believing, therefore, according to our previous statement, that the Almighty, having in His wisdom instituted one Church (which for the sake of distinction, has received the title of Catholic) intends, through the agency of His creatures, that it should last for ever—and conscientiously believing, through a clear and impartial interpretation of the Gospel commission, that the high trust of preserving the purest branch of it, has been confided to us,—we feel it a solemn duty incumbent upon us, not only to preserve its faith intact and pure, but equally to vindicate it from the glosses of ignorance and prejudice, and zealously to cultivate those peculiar doctrines, which have always marked and do still continue to mark the distinction between the Church of Christ, and the sects of Christianity.

By these principles, which instruct us how to perform our duty to God, without violating our obligations to man, we are actuated in whatever nation we may reside. We seek not to interfere with, much less to overthrow any Christian form of worship which may be established by its civil constitution, so long as it tends to promote the great ends of virtue and morality. For ourselves, we, at the same time, lay claim to the privilege of worshipping the Almighty in the manner we conceive to be prescribed by Him, and of keeping clear from what we consider to be error on one side or on the other, whether resulting from the innovations of the Protestant or of the Romanist. In this country, grateful for the toleration which is afforded to the reformed Catholic

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Church, its pious ministers, while they vindicate its doctrines and maintain its discipline, seek not to interfere with the presbyterian establishment; but, although they cannot enter into its communion, or attend its services, they duly appreciate its merits in contributing to rear and foster a thinking, a sober, a moral people. The same sentiments influence us, when resident in a country where the Church of Rome is established. Far be from our views that misdirected and fanatic zeal, which would seek, at all hazards, the downfall of even an erroneous mode of Christian worship, reckless of the consequences which in removing one stumbling block may open the door to a thousand others, and give loose to passions which war against the spirit of Christianity itself. That the day indeed will come when those branches of the Christian Church which still lie obscured under the corruptions of Rome, in the same state now, or nearly so, in which we were three centuries ago, will gradually be reformed according to our example, and by its own members be restored to that primitive purity to which we have returned, Christian charity commands us to hope—that the day may not be far removed Christian charity induces us to pray; still Christian humility instructs us to wait, in patience, for God's own time for the accomplishment of this glorious event. But if our charitable sentiments are thus largely exercised, when forming our opinions of other communions, how naturally, I repeat, are they exalted to brotherly love, when regarding members of our own. There is accordingly, among all true members of the reformed Catholic Church, a bond of union which no time, no distance, no

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disagreement even, on certain points in themselves indifferent can ever dissolve. In its welfare, wherever it may exist, in England, in Ireland, in presbyterian Scotland or republican America, in regions of the East, or the islands of the West, a true Catholic will take an interest, not less fervent, not less sincere, not less devoted than that which he experiences for the particular branch of it to which he may himself belong, 'whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.'

Thus bound by every tie of duty and affection to have in honour all those of our brethren, who 'continue to hold fast the form of sound words which they have heard;' we deem it equally incumbent upon us to prevent the rise, or to animadvert on the progress of error, whenever it appears to be insinuating itself within the pale of our vineyard. It is not, therefore, with an indifferent eye, that we observe its stealthy growth among the scattered members of our communion, in the different parts of the continent of Europe. It is a well known fact that many thousands of British subjects are at the present moment resident abroad. The difference which exists between that branch of the Church to which we belong, and the various Protestant Establishments, as well as the Church of Rome, is too striking not to be at once discerned. These absentees from the land of their fathers, therefore, feel a natural dislike to attend for a continuance, the public worship, as established in those countries in which they may have taken up their abode; while awful, indeed, must be the reflection to the pious, that there is either none qualified or none

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willing to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to the infant, or the Eucharist to the sick. An English clergyman is, consequently, the first object of their search; and with his aid, if attainable, they are accustomed to establish a chapel, under the sanction or connivance of the government, in which the English service is performed. In doing this, they are at present, by necessity, compelled to act upon the principle of the Independents, with their ministers unlicensed, their chapels unconsecrated, and their children unconfirmed! There is scarcely a mark of our Church to be discovered, except its liturgy; nay, even the propriety of the conduct of that clergyman who takes upon himself to officiate among them, for a permanency, may be questioned. The truth of this assertion, which is made without any feeling of disrespect towards the many pious and excellent clergymen, who are at present compelled by necessity to perform their functions unlicensed,—will easily be perceived by a slight reference to the ordination office. The Bishop immediately after the laying on of hands, is directed to deliver the Bible to the new-made priest, and to say: 'Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy Sacrament,'—(*not*, observe, in any place where he may find it convenient, *but*) 'in the congregation *where* thou shalt be lawfully appointed;' and those only we ought to deem lawfully appointed, according to our Twenty-third article, 'who have been chosen by men who have authority in the congregation or Church, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard'—that is to say, upon our episcopalian principles, by a Bishop. Thus, then, the clergy

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who officiate in the episcopal chapels in different parts of the Continent, are, through necessity, assuming an authority which was not bestowed upon them at their ordination, and which can only be conferred by a Bishop. It may be said this license may be obtained from an English Bishop;—and although an English Bishop, unable to visit the spot, might not, in every instance, be qualified to judge of the expediency of granting or withholding such license, we are ready to admit, that if this were the only reason, it would scarcely justify the recourse now had to a measure of an extraordinary nature; but when coupled with others of equal or of greater importance, it is not to be overlooked. There is no person, I believe, properly instructed in the principles of the Church, who will not readily acknowledge the very great importance of the solemn rite of confirmation. The fear, indeed, of falling into the error of the Romanists, and of classing it with the two great Sacraments of the Gospel, has, perhaps, induced some persons to rank this sacred ordinance too low, and to regard it merely in the light of an edifying ceremony. Upon its real importance as the σφραγὶς δωρεᾶς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, in a congregation so versed in primitive lore as the present, it were presumptuous in me to insist. Of this holy, apostolical, and important rite the children of many thousands of our brethren, not merely travelling over, but actually resident upon the Continent,—who being engaged in trade or business, are likely there to remain—are now deprived. If this, then, were the sole object to be gained, who would not rejoice at the pious work to which these venerable Prelates are this day about to lay

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their hands? But we go further, we not only lament the want of that order and regularity which result from the spiritual government of a Bishop,—we not only complain of the anomaly of Episcopalians dependent upon no Episcopus,—but we look with some degree of alarm, to the precedent which is set of presbyters establishing, when out of the jurisdiction of their national Bishops, independent congregations. Such a procedure, unwarranted by the doctrine, the canons, or the example of the primitive Church, can only be palliated by extreme necessity,—a necessity which it is the present object to remove. The occasional visitation, also, of a superior,—the influence of one coming like a father among his people, especially upon the younger and less experienced clergy, who are frequently employed in the continental chapels, and who are thus placed in situations where the want of advice and experience is deeply felt; —the check, too, which this will have upon those who may be gradually, and almost unawares, yielding to the allurements of dissipation unchecked by any moral or religious restraints—these are the benefits which cannot, ought not, to be overlooked.

To promote then, these holy objects to which we have alluded, and to avert those evils which we so justly apprehend,—to counteract also, that too prevalent opinion, that our Apostolic Church exists wherever its liturgy is read, or its doctrine preached;—to convince foreigners in general, and the Roman Catholics in particular, that ours is the primitive faith, and that with St. Ignatius we hold it not only necessary 'to have one common prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope,'

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but that it is also necessary 'that nothing be done without the Bishop;' *—that in the words of the same Ignatius, confirmed by the 32nd of the apostolical canons, it is lawful neither to baptize nor to celebrate the holy communion without the Bishop,'† without, that is to say, episcopal sanction—to evince, in short, our faith, that 'sine Episcopo nulla Ecclesia,' without a Bishop there can be no Church—is the present pious design of our right reverend fathers. Aware of their twofold character, as Bishops bound particularly to the discharge of their episcopal functions within the districts to which they have been appointed by Providence, and generally as Bishops of the Church at large, to promote the true faith in every place to which their influence may extend —aware also that to avoid great evils it is necessary to prevent small ones,—and that a schism may at the beginning be easily closed, which if left to widen unnoticed, may eventually be beyond our power to heal,—they have determined to invest with the episcopal character a pious and zealous presbyter of that branch of the Church which is established in England, who has for years voluntarily devoted himself to the spiritual interests of our absent brethren;—one, who qualified by his learning and piety as well as by his local experience, will cheerfully be guided by their advice, and in humility follow their example. And where—where can

* Ep. ad Magn. cap. vii.

† Ep. ad Smyrn. cap. viii. Tertullian also, speaking of Baptism, 'Dandi quidem habet jus summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus dehinc Presbyteri et Diaconi—*non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate.*' De Baptismo, cap. xvii

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he find an example more worthy of imitation than that which has been afforded him by the Bishops of Scotland? Should persecution await him,—which God of His infinite mercy avert! where could he find an example more worthy of imitation than that which has been afforded by those venerable Prelates who, not a century ago, achieved the work, without the fame of confessors, —who exposed themselves to the storm of persecution, to shelter their ark from the annihilating blast which swept around it,—who undauntedly defended the priesthood from the aggressions of Korah and his company, but were like Moses, 'the meekest of men,'—who 'dared to be honest in the worst of times,' that they might transmit their Church, and they have transmitted it, uninjured to you,—who having renounced every worldly comfort, every temporal hope for the sake of their conscience and their God, are now, we doubt not, enjoying a celestial crown with the martyrs of old.

Should he meet, on the contrary, as we hope and pray that he may, with that toleration abroad which we extend to the Romanists here, where can he look, I would ask again, for an example more worthy of imitation than that which is afforded him by the Bishops of Scotland, who have inherited the virtues, but blessed be God, not the sufferings of their ancestors,—whose learning, talents, and unassuming piety shine forth the more conspicuous from their poverty—who with the most uncompromising adherence to principle, unite a truly Christian liberality of sentiment—who in their zeal as Churchmen forget not their duty as subjects,

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but while vigorously contending for the faith that is in them, through the fear of God, yield, without a murmur, the precedence which the laws have conceded to others in their duty to the King.

Commissioned by these holy fathers, he goes, according to the principles before laid down, not to interfere with, (let this constantly be borne in mind,) not by word or deed to give offence to any established Church or sect, but simply and exclusively to superintend the worship of the British residents in France and Belgium; to afford them the means of worshipping God in their own way; to authorize their Sacraments, to confirm their children, to license their clergy, and where many have fixed their abode in one place, without a clergyman to officiate among them,—to ordain some person qualified on the spot.

This, my brethren, is the truly evangelical object which has brought together, upon the present occasion, the venerable fathers of your Church. But, 'except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.' We call upon you, therefore, we earnestly exhort you, to put up your prayers to the throne of grace, that the Great Disposer of all human events may prosper their pious design, that He may grant a full proportion of 'His heavenly benediction and grace' unto him who will be this day consecrated a successor of the Apostles; that, following their bright example, 'he may turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just;' that, 'by his life and doctrine, he may set forth the glory of his gracious Redeemer, and set forward the salvation of all men.' Finally, brethren, we

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call upon you, and earnestly exhort you to pray, that, by the important business of this eventful day, the knowledge of our apostolical doctrines may be more universally diffused, and, in consequence, more generally appreciated. May generation upon generation arise to preserve uncontaminated and pure that one Holy Catholic and Apostolical Church, which was planted by the Apostles, and watered by the blood of martyrs—which was corrupted by our grandsires, and reformed by our sires. Thus may our children's children—may generations yet unborn, who shall bear our names when all other memorial of us will be lost—join with us and all good Christians, in the Church triumphant in heaven, in ascribing blessing, honour, glory, and power unto the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, which was, and is, and is to come.

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SERMON III

'HEAR THE CHURCH.'

St. Matt. xviii. 17.

THIS little Sanctuary, in which we are now assembled,* will always be regarded by the English Churchman with feelings of pious sentiment and respect. Here from time immemorial, our sovereigns have worshipped, and our bishops preached; and these walls were the first which heard the sound of our English Liturgy. Here young Edward imbibed the principles of Divine Truth from the lips of Ridley and Cranmer; and here, in the reign of Elizabeth, her Bishops, supported by her united firmness, wisdom, and piety, manfully upheld the principles of the English Reformation, maintaining the equipoise against the Papist on the one hand, and on the other, against those ultra-protestants, who were anxious to introduce the foreign system, and to revolutionize religion instead of reforming the Church. Here too, Charles, who died a martyr for the principles of the Church,—for the Church of England boasts the only royal martyr in the calendar,—sought that strength from on high, which enabled him to lay down his 'grey discrowned head' upon the block, with a blessed peace of

* The Chapel Royal.

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mind, which a rebel nation, while depriving him of everything else, was unable to take away. Here, ever since, by faithful pastors, our British Sovereigns have loyally, dutifully, and respectfully, but, at the same time, I hope with firmness and fearlessness, been reminded of that solemn account they will one day have to render to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the Ruler of princes,—here they have been admonished of the awful responsibility of high office, of the temptations by which they are surrounded, of the example they are bound to set, of their duty as the nursing fathers and mothers of the Church—and here those Sovereigns, in the ordinances and sacraments of the Gospel, have sought for that Divine Grace, of which they have stood in need as much as, yea, from their increased responsibility, from their greater temptations and difficulties, if possible, more than the very meanest of their subjects.

In such a place it cannot be deemed improper, if I briefly lay before you the claims, the character, and the privileges of the Church. May God the Holy Spirit be with me while I speak, and with you while you hear; with me, that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak; with you, that you may receive the word with pure affection; with me that I may not give, with you that you may not take, offence.

Now, at the very outset, I must state that I refer to the Church, not as a mere National Establishment of Religion, but as the Church, a religious community, intrinsically independent of the State; that is to say, I am about to treat of the Church, not in its political, but simply and solely in its religious character.

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No one, who reads the Bible, can for one moment doubt, that Religion is or ought to be a national concern, so long as the Bible contains such awful denunciations against national apostasy and national vice, and while among the predicted blessings of Christianity, it was foretold as one, that Kings should be the nursing fathers, and Queens the nursing mothers of the Church. And to desire to belong to that religious society which happens to be established in our native land, is a sentiment patriotic, praiseworthy, and honourable. But there is always a still further question to be asked; namely, whether the society of Christians established by the Government, and invested with certain emoluments and privileges, be a pure branch of that Church which was instituted by our blessed Lord and His Apostles. And if it be *not* such, however willing we might be to preserve the peace of society, by refusing to injure a national institution, we should, nevertheless, be amply justified as Religionists, in refusing to conform to it. If the mere fact that a religious society is established by the civil government be sufficient to claim for it our adhesion, see what the consequence must be; we should be obliged, on such principles, to become Presbyterians in Scotland and Holland, Papists in France and Italy; nay, in some parts of the world, worshippers of the Mosque, and votaries of Brahma! whereas the consistent Protestant could not, of course, conform to the established Church in France or Italy, until those Churches have undergone a thorough reformation; the consistent English Churchman cannot conform to the Presbyterian establishment in Scotland, but in that part of the island attends the

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services of the Scottish Episcopal Church, which, though at one time established, was at the Revolution in 1688, from political considerations, deprived of its endowments, which were then given to the community of Presbyterians, which has there become the established religion.

Bless God, then, we may, that the true Church is established here in England, and that while as patriots we would support its establishment for our country's good, we can also, as Christians, conscientiously conform to it; yet it is not on the ground that it is established by the State, but on grounds much higher and holier than these, that in this sacred place we are to state its claims. So entirely independent is the Church (as the Church) of the State, that were all connexion between Church and State at this very moment to cease (though we may be sure the monarchy would be destroyed), the Church, as the Church, would continue precisely as she now is; that is to say, our Bishops, though deprived of temporal rank, would still exercise all those spiritual functions, which, conferred by higher than human authority, no human authority can take away; still to the vacant sees they would consecrate new Bishops, still ordain the Clergy, still confirm the baptized, still govern the Church; our priests, assisted by the deacons, would still administer the Sacraments, and preach the Gospel; our Liturgy, even though we were driven to upper rooms of our towns, or to the very caves of the desert, would still be solemnized. We may be sure of this, for this very thing has happened in times past. When the United States of America were English colonies, the English

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Church was there established: at the revolution, the State was destroyed. Monarchy has there ceased to exist; but the Church, though depressed for a time, remained uninjured: so that there—among the American republicans—under the superintendence of no fewer than sixteen Bishops, you will find her sacraments and ordinances administered, and all her ritual and liturgical services administered, with not less of piety, zeal, and solemnity than here in England; there you may see the Church, like an oasis in the desert, blessed by the dews of heaven, and shedding heavenly blessings around her, in a land where, because no religion is established, if it were not for her, nothing but the extremes of infidelity or fanaticism would prevail.

And so you may perceive what is meant, when we say, that we wish to speak of the Church, not as an establishment, but as *the* Church, a religious society, a particular society of Christians.

We will commence with an indisputable fact. In this country there is at this time a religious society, known by the name of the Church. The question is, when and by whom was this society instituted?

Now the Roman Catholics or Papists assert that it was instituted and founded, like the generality of Protestant sects, by certain Reformers in the 16th century, and thence they would deduce a strong argument against us. They would ask us, whether any man can take unto himself the office of the ministry, unless he be sent by God; and if we are scriptural Christians, if we take the Bible for our guide, if we act on that sound Protestant principle, with the fifth chapter to the

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Hebrews open before us, we must answer, No. Then they proceed to ask, How can *you* prove that your ministers are called of God to the office? And if their assertion were true that our Church was founded at the Reformation, we could give them no answer at all.

But at the period of the Reformation, when Cranmer and Ridley flourished, there was a Church existing and established in England, and as Archbishop of that Church, Cranmer, our celebrated Reformer, was consecrated. That Church had existed, as all parties admit, from the first planting of Christianity in England. But Archbishop Cranmer found, that in his time it had become in certain respects corrupted; that the Bishop of Rome, for example, had usurped over it an authority and influence which he did not possess by right: that many practices prevailed, some of them contrary to Scripture, and some of them much abused to superstition; such as the worshipping of saints and images, and the use of the Liturgy in a language not understood by the people, while opinions were prevalent (such as those relating to transubstantiation), decidedly erroneous, which the Church did not protest against, but on the contrary rather seemed to sanction. Now when once these errors were pointed out and proved to be unscriptural, our Divines would have been guilty of heresy had they pertinaciously adhered to them. Before the Reformation, those who adhered to them were *not* guilty of heresy, for they held the doctrines which (ever since the Reformation) we have renounced, from a mere error of fact. They supposed them to be revealed doctrines, and therefore they in humble faith

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received them; we, on the contrary, have ascertained that these doctrines were not revealed, and therefore, influenced by the same faith, we reject them: so that it is by one and the self-same principle, that both before and since the Reformation, the true members of the Church of England have been actuated. They said, and we say precisely the same, whatsoever is revealed, that we will not question but believe. But as to the fact, whether this or that doctrine *was* revealed, they were less cautious than we are now; we who, perhaps, err on the very side of caution.

But, to return to the Archbishop and the Prelates who aided him in the work of reformation. They discovered that all the errors which they detected in their Church were innovations gradually and imperceptibly introduced, and not belonging originally or essentially to the Church of England; that, even in the seventh century, five councils were held in England, when the doctrines denounced by the Reformers were unknown. What, then, did the Archbishop and his associates determine to do? They determined, as they had an undoubted right to do, not to overthrow the old Church and establish a protestant sect in its place, but merely to reform, to correct abuses in the existing Church. And, aided by the civil powers, this they did, by asserting first, their own independence, as Bishops, against the usurped authority of the Pope, who had no more authority of right in England than the Bishop of Canterbury had in Rome; by discontinuing practices which led evidently to unscriptural superstitions; by protesting against certain prevalent erroneous doctrines;

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by translating the Scriptures and the ancient Ritual and Liturgy, which latter, (the Ritual and Liturgy we still retain,) besides translating, they re-arranged. But, though they did this, they still remained the same Bishops and divines of the same Church. An attempt was made to revive the old superstitions in Queen Mary's reign, but, by the pious firmness of Elizabeth, her Bishops were enabled to complete the work so happily commenced in the reigns of her father and brother.

Now, from this historical statement, you see the absurdity of which the Papists are guilty, when they accuse us of having deserted or dissented from the old Church, and of having reared a new Church, of human origin—the absurdity of their speaking of theirs as the old Church and the old religion.

About two years ago this very chapel, in which we are now assembled, was repaired; certain disfigurements removed; certain improvements made; would it not be absurd, on that account, to contend that it is no longer the Chapel Royal? Would it not be still more absurd if some one were to build a new chapel in the neighbourhood, imitating closely what this chapel was five years ago, and carefully piling up all the dust and rubbish which was at that time swept from hence, and then pronounce that, not this, to be the ancient chapel of the sovereigns of England? The absurdity is at once apparent; but this is precisely what has been done by the Roman Catholic or Papist. The present Church of England is the old Catholic Church of England, reformed, in the reigns of Henry, Edward,

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and Elizabeth, of certain superstitious errors; it is the same Church which came down from our British and Saxon ancestors, and as such, it possesses its original endowments, which were never, as ignorant persons foolishly suppose, taken from one Church, and given to another. The Church remained the same after it was reformed as it was before, just as a man remains the same after he has washed his face as he was before; just as Naaman, the leper, remained the same Naaman after he was cured of his leprosy, as he was before. And so regularly, so canonically was the Reformation conducted, that even those who thought no reformation requisite, still remained for a time in the Church; they did not consider what was done (though they did not approve of it) sufficient to drive them into a schism. It was not till the twelfth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, that, listening to the exhortations of the Pope, they quitted the Church, and formed a new sect, from which the present Romish dissenters have descended, and in which were retained all those errors in opinion and practice, all that rubbish which the Catholic Church in England had at the Reformation corrected and swept away. Let it always be remembered that the English Romanists separated from us, not we from them; we did not go out from them, but they from us. The slightest acquaintance with that neglected branch of learning, Ecclesiastical History, will convince us of this. They left the Church of England to which they originally belonged, because they thought their bishops had reformed too much, had become too Protestant; just as Protestant Dissenters left us, because

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they thought we had not reformed enough; that we were, as they style us, too popish. The one party left us because they wanted no reform, the other because, instead of a reformation, they wished a religious revolution; the Reformers of the Church of England carefully preserving the middle path.

The Church of England, then, that Church to which we belong, is the old Catholic Church which was originally planted in this country. But the Founders of the Church of England—remember I do not mean the Reformers, for nothing but ignorance, the most gross, will speak of them as our founders; ignorance which concedes to the Papists an argument of the very greatest importance—the Founders or planters of the Church of England, both Britons and Saxons, were bishops ordained by other bishops, precisely as is the case at the present time; the catalogue has been carefully and providentially preserved from the beginning. And the Bishops who ordained them had been ordained by other Bishops, and so back to the Apostles, who ordained the first Bishops, being themselves ordained by Christ. This is what is called the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession, which is a doctrine of considerable importance. For unless the ministers of the Gospel are sent by Christ, what right have they to act in his name? If we were passing through a foreign land, we might be perfectly competent to act as ambassador for the Queen of England; but would any foreign potentate receive us as such, unless we could produce our credentials? Many a lawyer may be as well qualified to perform the duties of the Lord Chan-

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cellor as the Chancellor himself, but is he able to act as Chancellor? No, certainly; not unless he has first received a commission from his sovereign. And so with respect to religion. What right has a man to take upon himself to act as God's ambassador, unless God has commissioned him so to act? An eloquent man he may be, and one mighty in the Scripture, but he has no authority to speak in God's name, until God has given him that authority. How, asks St. Paul, shall they preach, i.e. preach lawfully, except they be sent, i.e. sent by God? No man, says the Scripture, taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God. Nay, even Christ, says the Apostle, 'glorified not Himself to be made an high-priest, but he that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;' even He entered not on His ministerial office until He was externally appointed thereto.

As the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the Father, so were the Apostles sent by Him. 'As my Father hath sent Me,' He says, soon after His resurrection, 'even so I send you.' Now how had the Father sent Him? He had sent Him to act as His supreme minister on earth; as such to appoint under Him subordinate ministers, and to do what He then did, when His work on earth was done, to hand on His commission to others. The Apostles, in like manner, were sent by Christ to act as His chief ministers in the Church, to appoint subordinate ministers under them, and then, as He had done, to hand on their commission to others. And on this commission, after our Lord had ascended upon high, the Apostles proceeded to act. They formed

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their converts into Churches: these Churches consisted of baptized believers, to officiate among whom subordinate ministers, priests and deacons, were ordained, while the Apostles who first formed any particular Church exercised over it episcopal superintendence, either holding an occasional visitation, by sending for the clergy to meet him (as St. Paul summoned to Miletus the clergy of Ephesus), or else transmitting to them those pastoral addresses, which, under the name of Epistles, form so important a portion of Holy Scripture. At length, however, it became necessary for the Apostles to proceed yet further, and to do as their Lord had empowered them to do, to hand on their commission to others, that at their own death the governors of the Church might not be extinct. Of this we have an instance in Titus, who was placed in Crete by St. Paul, to act as chief pastor or Bishop, and another in Timothy, who was in like manner set over the Church of Ephesus. And when Timothy was thus appointed to the office of chief pastor, he was associated with St. Paul, who, in writing to the Philippians, commences his salutation thus: 'Paul and Timotheus, to the servants of Jesus Christ who are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons.'

Now we have here the three orders of the ministry clearly alluded to. The title of Bishop is, to be sure, given to the second order; but it is not for words, but for things, that we are to contend. Titles may be changed, while offices remain: so senators exist, though they are not now of necessity old men; and most

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absurd would it be, to contend that when we speak of the Emperor Constantine, we can mean no other office than that held under the Roman republic, because we find Cicero also saluted as emperor.

So stood the matter in the apostolic age, when the chief pastors of the Church were generally designated Apostles or Angels, i.e. messengers sent by God Himself. In the next century, the office remaining, the designation of those who held it was changed, the title of Apostle was confined to the twelve, including St. Paul; and the chief pastors who succeeded them were thenceforth called Bishops, the subordinate ministers being styled priests and deacons. And thus we see, as Christ was sent by the Father, so He sent the Apostles; as the Apostles were sent by Christ, so did they send the first race of Bishops; as the first race of Bishops was sent by the Apostles, so they sent the second race of Bishops, the second the third, and so down to our present Bishops, who can thus trace their spiritual descent from St. Peter and St. Paul, and prove their Divine authority to govern the Churches over which they are canonically appointed to preside. Like the Apostles, they have the right to appoint under them the subordinate ministers; and so let the Papists say what they will, the Clergy of England can establish their right by commission from Christ to minister in sacred things.

Such was originally the constitution not of one or two Churches only, but of the Church Universal—the Church Catholic. Against the Church so constituted in various places, sectarians arose, even in the apostolic

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age. These sects were generally, like modern sects, distinguished by the names of their founders. But true Churches disdained to be called after any human being whatever, since of them Christ was the Author and Finisher. The episcopal Churches, persevering in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, were styled collectively the Catholic Church; and in order to distinguish it from the surrounding sects, the true orthodox Church in any particular country was sometimes called a branch of the Catholic Church, sometimes the Catholic Church of that place, and hence the term Catholic came by degrees to signify (as Bishop Beveridge remarks) much the same as our term orthodox—the orthodox Church, and orthodox members of the same—that Church which adhered to the scriptural discipline and doctrine universally received, as distinguished from the discipline invented, and the doctrine propounded, by individual teachers.

You see here, by the way, the folly (if it be not a sin, for it is calling 'evil good, and good evil,') of styling the Romish Dissenters in England, as some persons in extreme ignorance, and others perhaps with bad intentions do, Catholics; for this insinuates, that we of the Church of England are heretics, whereas you have seen that ours, not theirs, is the true and orthodox Church of Christ in this country, the real Catholic Church in and of England. If they dislike the name of Papist, we may speak of them as Romanists, or even Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics they may be styled, for (though schismatics and dissenters in England) in France, and Italy, they belong

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to a Church true by descent, though corrupted by Roman or Popish superstitions. A bad man is still a man, and you may refuse to associate with him before he reforms; but still you will never permit him so to style himself a man as to imply that you yourself are an inhuman being.

Pure in its doctrine, apostolic in its discipline, and edifying in its ceremonies, this Catholic and Apostolic Church diffused its blessings, and preserved its purity for many hundred years. In the middle ages it existed, still working good and administering grace according to the exigence of the times; emitting a ray of light when all around was dark. But the surrounding ignorance and gloom prevented the detection of various corruptions and disfigurements which by degrees crept into it, until, in the sixteenth century, the sun of learning having dawned upon Europe, its defects in this country began to betray themselves too obviously to be any longer tolerated. Of these defects, so far as the English branch of the Church was concerned, the Bishops of the Church of England, as I have before stated, by degrees became aware, and while they venerated the fabric which Apostles had reared, and of which Christ Himself was the chief corner stone, they carefully removed the incrustations which disfigured it, and sweeping away the rubbish by which it had been overlaid, displayed the real Rock upon which it had been built. Thus was the Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which we express our belief in the creeds, rescued in England from Popish domination, and (reformed or brought back to its primitive purity, digni-

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fied in its simplicity) it retained the ministry in regular succession from the Apostles, and a Ritual and Liturgy which can themselves in great part be traced back to the Apostolic age.

Although causelessly to separate from such a Church must be a schismatical act, yet we do not uncharitably pronounce sentence of condemnation upon those who have, by circumstances over which they have no control, been brought up without its pale. In error, of course, we believe them to be, but certainly not in such error from that circumstance as to endanger their salvation; and if we suppose them, as we must do, to lack our privileges, this ought only to make us respect them the more if at any time we find them (with fewer advantages) surpassing us in godliness. We do not confine God's grace and favour to the Church, for we remember that though Job was not a member of the then Church of God, still he was a man eminently pious and highly-favoured; we remember, that though Balaam was not in the Church, yet he was an inspired Prophet; we remember that Jethro also, the father-in-law of Moses, though not a proselyte to Israel (and the Church at that time was confined to the Israelites), was yet a servant of God; we remember that the Rechabites were actually commended by God at the very time He passed censure upon those who were then His Church —the people of Israel.

Remembering all this, we say not that other denominations of Christians are cast out from the mercy of God through the Saviour, because they belong not to the Church; all that we say is, that it does not

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follow that these concessions must render void the divine appointment of the Church, the divine command to all nations, and of course to all mankind, to be united with it, or the scriptural evidence for episcopacy as the divinely sanctioned organization of its ministry,—and we contend, that a treasure having been committed to us, we are not to undervalue it lest we should offend others, but are to preserve it in its purity, and in all its integrity to transmit it to our children and our children's children.

And let me ask, Is not the privilege of belonging to a Church thus orthodox in its doctrine, and true by descent, thus both Catholic and Protestant, a privilege for which we should be deeply grateful to the providence and grace of God? And will not the account we shall have to render be awful, if we neglect, despise, or forego the advantages thus placed within our reach?

Let us ever remember, that the primary object for which the Church was instituted by Christ, its Author and Finisher, and for which the apostolical succession of its ministers was established; that the primary object for which through ages of persecution, and ages of prosperity, and ages of darkness, and ages of corruption, and ages of reformation, and ages of latitudinarianism, and now in an age of rebuke and blasphemy, now when we have fallen on evil days and evil tongues, the primary object for which the Church has still been preserved by a providential care, marvellous sometimes if not miraculous in our eyes, was and is, to convey supernaturally the saving merits of the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, and the sanctifying graces of His

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Holy Spirit to the believer's soul. In the Church it is, that the appointed means are to be found by which that mysterious union with Christ is promoted, in which our spiritual life consists; in her it is that the third Person of the Blessed Trinity abideth for ever, gradually to change the heart of sinful man, and to make that flesh which He finds stone; gradually to prepare us for heaven, while our ascended Saviour is preparing heaven for us. And oh! my brethren, what a privilege it is to have this well of living waters in which you may wash and be clean! You know that you are sinful creatures, very far gone from righteousness; you know that your condition is such that you cannot turn and prepare yourselves by your own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God; you know that by nature you cannot love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and strength: you cannot discharge the various duties of your various situations in life; you know that whatever your condition now may be, the hour must come of affliction and sorrow, of sickness and sadness, the inevitable hour of death; and the Church is instituted to convey to you pardon upon your repentance, and grace in time of need; it is instituted to instruct you in your ignorance, to comfort you in your sorrows, to elevate you in your devotions, to bring you into communion with your Saviour, your Sanctifier, your God; to prepare you for the hour of death, yea, for the day of judgment; and this she chiefly does through the Sacraments of the Gospel, and the other divinely appointed ordinances of religion, if of them you will but avail yourselves.

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But this is not all; while the Church thus ministers grace to individuals, it is part of her business to preserve, hand down, and proclaim the truth, the whole truth, as it is in Jesus. And our duty, therefore, it is —especially, if we happen by God's Providence to be called to situations of influence, rank, or authority—by all the means in our power, to increase her efficiency in this respect, to place her on the watch-tower, that her voice may be heard through the length and the breadth of the land: our duty it is to take care that her faith be preserved intact and pure; our duty it is to vindicate her from the glosses of ignorance, and the misrepresentations of prejudice and malice; our duty it is clearly to define, and zealously to maintain those peculiar doctrines and that peculiar discipline, which have always marked, and do still continue to mark, the distinction between the Church of Christ, administered under the superintendence of chief Pastors or Bishops who have regularly succeeded to the Apostles, from those sects of Christianity which exist under self-appointed teachers.

Against the Church the world seems at this time to be set in array. To be a true and faithful member of the Church, requires no little moral courage. Basely to pretend to belong to her while designing mischief against her in the heart, this is easy enough; but manfully to contend for her because she is the Church, a true Church, a pure Church, a holy Church, this is difficult to those who court the praise of men, or fear the censure of the world. May the great God of

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heaven, may Christ the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls, who is over all things in the Church, put it, my brethren, into your hearts and minds to say and feel (as I do), 'As for me and my house, we will live in the Church, we will die in the Church, and if need shall be, like our martyred forefathers, we will die for the Church.'

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SERMON IV.

A CALL TO UNION ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION.

'*Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?*'—Acts vii. 26.

It would be a work of supererogation if, in addressing such a congregation as the present, I were to insist on the important duty incumbent upon all who are commissioned to preach the Gospel, and to act as the governors of the Church of Christ, of maintaining the truth and the whole truth as it is in Jesus—of declaring all the counsel of God. By the injunction of this duty, the highest of our mental faculties and the most vigorous of our intellectual energies are all enlisted on the side of religion, and our lifetime is to be employed either in ascertaining the will of the Almighty, or in vindicating his ways to man. But so long as differences shall exist in the capabilities and powers of different minds, it will be scarcely within the circle of possibility to avoid, in the discharge of this duty, some diversity of opinion, and, in consequence, occasional discussion and debate; nor has it ever been the wish of the Church to silence such discussion or to proscribe all

[Preached at Leeds, on the occasion of the visitation of the Bishop of Ripon, 1838.]

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difference of opinion. Coincidence of opinion, even in points which are not fundamental, is, of course, desirable, but it is not to be laid down as one of the necessary terms of communion. It is to a wish and endeavour to secure a perfect coincidence of opinion that we may trace the formation of many religious sects; and on this account it is that the persons composing each separate sect are comparatively few in number, while the sects themselves have, like meteors, glared for a time and then sunk into nothingness. The system of the Church has, on the contrary, always been to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, by insisting, not on an identity of subordinate opinion, but simply on an identity of principle. Within certain prescribed limits she has always permitted a considerable latitude of opinion. Beyond those limits are the regions of heresy; within them she permits her children piously to inquire and fearlessly to discuss. Unless this latitude were permitted, one of two things would inevitably follow; either all discussion would cease, and the result would be a spiritual stagnation and apathy, than which few things can be more injurious to the cause of truth, or discussion would always lead to a breach of communion and split us into factions and sects. By those who agree in principle, certain data are assumed as indisputable, and so long as those data are honestly acknowledged, much difference of opinion is allowable, but in either advocating or refuting an opinion under these circumstances, no one has a right to speak of his opponent as a heretic, since heresy means, in fact, the denial of the acknowledged data.

Much confusion has been caused in the minds of

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men by their supposing that the religionists of England are to be divided, so far as principles are concerned, into two classes only, whereas, in point of fact, we are divided into three;—the Churchman, who may, from his avoiding the errors of the two opposite extremes, be called both a Protestant and a Catholic; the Romish Dissenter or Papist; the Protestant Dissenter or Ultra-Protestant. And union among these can never be expected, by wise and practical men, until, as distinct classes, two of them become extinct by merging into the third; that is, until their distinct and distinguishing principles cease to exist.

The origin of this threefold division is to be traced to the Reformation, and to the manner in which that great movement was conducted in this country.

No view can be more erroneous than that which would regard the English Reformers as men, who, having devised a peculiar system of theology, were determined to supplant the established system that they might put their own in its place. Their object was simple, intelligible, and practical; it was to correct abuses in the existing Catholic Church, which had come down to them from their ancestors, and of which they were themselves the bishops and spiritual pastors. Those abuses,—deviations from the real principles of the Church,—were gradually discovered, and, as from time to time they were brought to light, it was the endeavour of our Reformers gradually, and as opportunity occurred, to supply a remedy by regular and canonical means. From the commencement to the conclusion of their holy work, they indignantly repu-

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diated the idea of their wish to overturn one Church and to establish another; a charge continually brought against them by the advocates of Popery.* For example, in the reign of Henry VIII. it was enacted that neither the King, his successors, nor his subjects should apply to the Bishop of Rome for any dispensation, faculty, or delegacy. This was the first blow at the Papal usurpations in this country: but, anticipating the kind of attack which would be made by the partizans of Rome, and to prevent misconstruction and misrepresentation, it is expressly provided that 'nothing in this Act shall be interpreted as if the King and his subjects intended to decline or vary from the congregation of Christ's Church in anything concerning the very articles of the *Catholic* faith† in Christendom, or in any other things declared by Holy Scripture and the Word of God necessary for their salvation.'‡ In the orders for regulating the pulpit in 1535, the clergy are directed to pray for the Catholic Church of Christ; and of this our Catholic Church of England, our Sovereign Lord King Henry VIII. is declared to be immediately under God the supreme head.§ And Tonstal, in his Letter to Cardinal Pole, explains very clearly the intention which at this period of the Reformation existed:

* Our Prayer Book identifies the Church *before* the Reformation with the Church *after* the Reformation, in a singular manner:—'And moreover, whereas St. Paul would have such language spoken in the Church as they might understand and have profit by hearing the same; the service *in* THIS *Church of England*, these many years, hath been read in Latin,' &c.—*Preface to Prayer Book.*

† See Note I, at the end of the volume.

‡ Collier, Eccles. Hist. Part ii. Book ii. 84, 85.

§ Ibid. ii. ii. 100.

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To the charge of the King's departing from the *Catholic* communion, he says, 'His Highness is much injured by the imputation; for it has all along been his practice to adhere to the unity of the *Catholic* Church, to maintain the ancient doctrine, and to conform to the worship and ecclesiastical government of the rest of Christendom.' 'It is true,' he continues, 'that he has rescued the English Church from the encroachments of the Court of Rome, but if this be singularity, he deserves commendation, for the King has only reduced matters to their original state, and helped the English Church to her ancient freedom.' * At the trial of Lambert, in 1538, the Reformation had considerably advanced, but still on the same principles; for Day, Bishop of Chichester, in the speech by which the trial was opened, observed that the King had thrown off the usurpations of the See of Rome, discharged some idle monks, renounced the idolatrous regard for images, published the Bible in English, and made some lesser alterations in the Church, but that he was nevertheless resolved to keep constant to the Catholic faith and customs. † And in the spring of 1543, the Act for the advancement of true religion and the abolishment of the contrary, declared it to be expedient to 'ordain and establish a certain form of pure and sincere teaching, agreeable to God's word and the true doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church.' ‡

The facts here stated are sufficient to show that the holy work of Church Reformation, if gradual, had still

* Collier, Eccles. Hist. Part ii. Book ii. 136.

† Ibid. ii. ii. 151. ‡ Jenkyn's Cranmer, i. 36.

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been great and effectual even in Henry's reign; in that of Edward, our Reformers proceeded more rapidly and did some things, perhaps, inconsiderately, but still the same principle was professed. In his speech at the opening of the Convocation we find the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, exhorting the Clergy to advance further in the Reformation,—but how? by throwing off some unprimitive remains.* And by the statute of 1547, which sanctioned the giving of the Eucharist in both kinds, a reference is made, in justification of the proceeding, to the common use and practice both of the Apostles and of the primitive Christians by the space of 500 years.† In the King's injunction against images, it is stated as a reason, that 'the Catholic Church made use of no representations of this kind for many years.'‡ In the Act of Uniformity, after alluding to the various Rituals and Liturgies at that time used in England, it is affirmed that his Majesty appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury, with several others of the most learned Bishops and Divines, to draw up an office for all parts of divine service, and that in doing so they were to have regard to the directions of the Holy Scripture and the usages of the primitive Church.§ In reply to the demands of the Devonshire rebels, Archbishop Cranmer, acting authoritatively, particularly insisted to them 'that the practice and belief of the Church of England was agreeable to the decisions of the general councils, while the decrees they (the rebels) talked of, were mere stretches of the Court of Rome to enslave the rest of

* Collier, Eccles. Hist. Part ii. Book iv. 233.
† Ibid. ii. iv. 236. ‡ Ibid. ii. iv. 241. § Ibid. ii. iv. 263.

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Christendom.'* Again, in the answer of the King's Council to the Princess, afterwards Queen Mary, in 1551, penned most probably by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by Ridley Bishop of London, it is averred 'that the English Reformation had recovered the worship to the directions of Scripture, and the usage of the primitive Church.'† And when the Prayer Book was translated and corrected and brought to its present form, it was recommended by the Clergy to the laity in these words: 'Here you have an order of Prayer, and for the reading of Scripture, much agreeable to the mind and purposes of the old fathers:'‡ and as such it was received by the laity; it was received as 'a very godly order agreeable to the word of God and the primitive Church.'§ In Queen Mary's reign Cranmer offered to justify the English Communion Service both from the authority of Scripture and the practice of the primitive Church.‖ What, indeed, was his defence of our Communion Service? What his objection to the Mass? Of the first he asserted, 'it is conformable to the order which our Saviour Christ did observe and command to be observed, and which his Apostles and the primitive Church used many years; whereas the Mass in many things hath not only no foundation of Christ's Apostles or the primitive Church, but is manifestly contrary to the same, and containeth many horrible abuses in it.' 'And when they, the Papists, boast of the faith which has been in the Church these thousand years, we will join them on this point; for

* Collier, ii. iv. 271.
† Ibid. ii. iv. 311.
‡ Preface to the Prayer Book.
§ Collier, ii. iv. 320.
‖ Ibid. i. v. 347.

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that doctrine and usage is to be followed which was in the Church fifteen hundred years past. And we shall prove that the order of the Church set out at this present by Act of Parliament is the same that was used in the Church fifteen hundred years past. And so shall they never be able to prove theirs.'* In like manner the imprisoned clergy, in that reign of terror, made a similar but more extensive offer to justify the reformed doctrine and worship by Scripture and antiquity, and this under the highest penalties. Their expressions, indeed, are as striking as they are strong—'If they failed in maintaining the homilies and service set forth in the late reign, or in proving the unlawfulness of the Popish liturgic forms, and that, *by Catholic principles and authority*, they were willing to be burnt at the stake, or to submit to any other death of ignominy or torture.'† On the accession of Elizabeth in 1559, a public and authorised disputation was held between the abettors of Popery and the upholders of a Reformation. On the side of the Reformers the most prominent was Horn, Dean of Durham, and he commenced by professing at once the deference which his friends acknowledged to be due to the authority of the Catholic Church, declaring the willingness of the English Reformers to refer the whole controversy to the Holy Scriptures *and the Catholic Church*, but maintaining at the same time that by the word of God they meant only the canonical Scriptures, and by the custom of the primitive Church,

* Archbishop Cranmer's 'Declarations concerning the Mass.' Works, iv. p. 2, 3, Jenkyn's Edit.

† Collier, Eccles. Hist. Part ii. Book v. 378.

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the general practice of Catholics for the first five centuries.* In the same sentiment did the laity concur when, in a subsequent Act of Parliament, the authority of the first four general Councils was recognized.† We have heard already the declaration of one sovereign at the commencement of our Reformation, that it was not intended to set up a new religion, but merely to correct abuses in the Church,—and precisely the same assertion was made, at its completion, by Queen Elizabeth. In her reply to the Roman Catholic Princes she proclaimed 'that there was no new faith propagated in England; no religion set up but that which was commanded by our Saviour, practised by the primitive Church, and approved by the Fathers of the best antiquity.' ‡ Moreover the very convocation of 1571, which originally enjoined subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, confirmed at the same time the principle of the English Reformation, by decreeing that nothing should be taught as an article of faith, except what is supported by the authority of Scripture and Catholic tradition,§ which principle is again authoritatively proclaimed in our 30th Canon, wherein it is affirmed that 'it was not the purpose of the Church of England to forsake or reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in *all* things which they held and practised, and that therefore it doth with reverence

* Collier, ii. vi. 416. Conf. Strype's Annals, Appendix, 1465, Burnet's Records, ii. 474.

† 1 Eliz. c. 1. sec. 36, A.D. 1558.

‡ Collier, ii. vi. 436.

§ Can. de Concionatoribus. Wilkin's Concilia, iv. 267.

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retain those ceremonies which do neither endamage the Church of God nor offend the minds of sober men;—and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity and from the Apostolical Churches which were their first founders.' *

I shall not detain you by pointing out how that principle was still avowed and acted on when, in the reigns of James I. and Charles II., some further reformations were effected in our Church, but I proceed to show how another principle was introduced among the English Protestants.

The foreign reformers were not placed under the same advantageous circumstances as favoured the proceedings of those who conducted the reformation of the English Church. They were not generally the rulers and governors of their respective churches. As abuses were discovered they protested against them. They called for reform, yet had no wish or intention to separate. But in most of the foreign churches, the Bishops, instead of correcting, defended the corruptions, and in process of time the anti-reformation party succeeded in driving from their communion the friends of a Reformation. Thus the Protestants were obliged, by circumstances, to form for themselves separate and independent religious communions. But in doing so they devised no regular system, for they seem to have regarded the measure to which they were compelled, as one of only a temporary nature, and having solemnly

* Canon 30. See note II., at the end of the volume.

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appealed to a general council, they hoped that the time would come when the Western Church would reform itself and receive once again into its bosom those whom it had unjustly expelled for advocating its true principles.* But it was not long before, among the less enlightened friends of the Reformation, a spirit of fanaticism was excited; and acting, like the man who continued to whet and whet his knife until at last there was no steel left in it, they wished to abscind every ordinance, phraseology, and doctrine which might seem to connect them even indirectly with Rome, and desired new ceremonies, a new system of theology, a new theological vocabulary, a new Church. And they were not long without a leader in a man of vast mental powers and of ardent piety, but of an austere temper and strong personal ambition, John Calvin. Instead of comparing, like our own Reformers and the early Protestants of Germany, the existing system of theology with Holy Writ and the traditional doctrine of the early Church, he invented an entirely new system of his own, to which, with more than papal intolerance, he called for a prostration of the judgment, and he proceeded to the length of shedding human blood to support it. Instead of seeking to reform the Church, he was ambitious to build up a sect which might serve as a model to all other religious communions, and over which he seemed willing to usurp such authority as to render it doubtful whether he did not intend to divert to Geneva the appeals which had been formerly made to Rome.

* Note III.

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When the persecutions of Queen Mary's reign drove so many of the English abroad, there were some of our countrymen who, first at Frankfort and afterwards at Geneva, were prepared to decry the English Reformation for not having proceeded far enough, and to embrace the foreign system of the Swiss sect.* By Calvin our Prayer Book was denounced as containing fooleries, only tolerable from the exigency of the times, and it was determined to supply its place by a ritual less accordant with the ancient form of worship, and more conformable to the Genevan model. Instead of coinciding with our English Catholic Reformers in their deference to antiquity, they referred, when Scripture was ambiguous or doubtful, to the writings of Calvin, and regarded as heretical all who refused to receive his dogma as truth.

And thus when the persecuted Protestants† returned to England, on the accession of Elizabeth, the English Church was composed of three distinct parties, all animated by distinct principles: those who wished not to adopt any foreign system of theology, but merely to complete the Reformation of their ancient national Church, by doing what was absolutely necessary for the purpose, and nothing more; those who were enamoured of the Helvetic Reformation, and complained that our Reformers had not gone far enough: and those who, complaining that they had gone too far, were adverse to the Reformation altogether.

Many and bitter were the disputes that arose, and

* Note IV. † Note V.

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it was not long before the bolder and more consistent of the followers of Calvin separated from the Church, which they regarded as semi-papistical, and formed independent conventicles. As persons assuming to be the supporters of a purer system of Reformation than that which had been adopted by our English Reformers, they were known by the designation of Puritans.* Their example was soon after followed by those of the opposite extreme, who were the advocates of the discarded corruptions. These persons entered clandestinely into a correspondence with the Pope of Rome, who sent some Spanish and Italian Priests to officiate among them; and adopting another foreign system, that established at the Council of Trent, they formed that schismatical sect from which the present English Romanists or Papists are descended.†

This is a short sketch of the origin of those three distinct classes of Christians, subject, of course, to a variety of subdivisions, which we find in this country. But although the bolder, more consistent, and perhaps more conscientious of the Puritans quitted the Church, a large party who embraced their principles still conformed, some from timidity, some from worldly considerations, and some because they thought that the

* The name was probably given to them, in the first instance, as a nickname, by their opponents, and they afterwards gloried in it, and so assumed it to themselves. In a puritan libel, A.D. 1574, 'A Letter of Robert Johnson to Goodman, Dean of Westminster,' he calls the Dean '*a Papist*, a Schismatic, and a PURITANE,' printing the last word in capitals, as if it were a term of reproach, which he retorted.

† Note VI.

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Church of England, being only comparatively corrupt, *i.e.* less pure than some of the foreign sects, they were not obliged to secede, and might eventually cause their own principles to triumph in the Church itself. These persons, assisted by the Puritans from without, were continually urging our Rulers, spiritual and temporal, to greater measures of reform; and, complaining of the remnants and rags of Popery still preserved in our rites, ceremonies, and ecclesiastical habits, they 'inveighed against the established discipline of the Church, and accounted every thing from Rome which was not from Geneva.'*

A contest between parties disagreeing in principle is always a contest of life and death, a war of extermination,—for principles may be broken, but can never be bent—may be silenced but can never yield. And so was it with the Protestants of England. The contest was whether the country should adhere to the principles of the English or to those of the foreign Reformers, and the war was carried on unremittingly from the accession of Elizabeth to the fatal termination of the reign of Charles, who died a martyr for the principles of the English Reformation, or (which is the same thing) for the principles of the Catholic Church. During the great rebellion the advocates of the foreign system triumphed, and the Church, with the Crown, was laid prostrate in the dust. But at that period a modification of their principle was introduced among those who, in opposing the system of English Reformation, had till

* Note VII.

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then been united. Hitherto the question had been whether the Bible was to be received according to the interpretation of the ancient Church, or according to the interpretation of the Genevan Sect. But when the descendants of the original Puritans endeavoured to force their system upon the country as the one to be exclusively established, they in their turn were opposed by founders of new sects who regarded their own interpretations of Scripture to be as irrefragable as that of Calvin. It was then, and under such circumstances, that the real ultra-protestant principle, which has ever since prevailed, as contrasted with the principles of the Church of England, was brought to light;—that principle being not merely that the Bible and the Bible only ought to be our religion, but also that the Bible is to be understood by each person in that sense which he is persuaded by argument to regard as the true sense; and that he is then to unite himself with that society of Christians with whom the same or similar arguments have been productive of the same effect. This principle is, of course, subversive of union. For on these grounds the only difference between the coldest Socinian who acknowledges the truth of Scripture, and the highest supra-lapsarian Calvinist, is a difference in their logic or their powers of biblical criticism,—and while both parties may argue, neither may consistently censure. * And thus the Ultra-protestant party gradually split into various hostile factions, and their divisions led eventually to the restitution of the Church with the restoration of the Monarchy.

* Note VIII.

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At the same time a change took place in the *policy* of the Dissenters from the Church. The attempt had been to supplant the Church and to supply her place by the establishment of the Genevan system. The experiment was made and it had failed. And the demand was now, for what they had themselves, in times past vehemently protested against,—a civil toleration. They asked for themselves that toleration which, when dominant,* they refused to extend to the Church, and a toleration was obtained;—a toleration which, just in itself, has been peculiarly advantageous to the Church; for it has enabled her to do what before she was unable to do—without breach of charity to insist upon the observance of her principles, and to proclaim the most unwelcome truths; it has introduced that *moral* discipline among us which no external powers could enforce. In vain did our Reformers appeal to the strong arm of the law to compel that conformity to the regulations of the Church which is now rendered, according to the best of his understanding and ability, by every clergyman of common honesty and honour: the Church is now able to say, without any spirit of persecution, 'Assent to my fundamental doctrines, and adhere to my internal regulations, or depart from my communion. However blameworthy I may think your conduct, for such a departure, you are no longer subjected to temporal penalties, and, therefore, as a man not merely of religion but of honour, depart.' †

Our principle is thus reduced within a very narrow compass, intelligible to the least enlightened mind.

* Note IX. † Note X.

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Every conscientious English Clergyman acts on the principle, that while Scripture and Scripture only is his rule of faith, he is, in the interpretation of Scripture, to defer to the Ritual, Liturgy, Articles, and Formularies of the Church of England: he is to promote the glory of God in the highest, peace upon earth, and good will among men, but to do so, not in the way which he may imagine to be the wisest, but according to the Regulations, Canons, Rubrics, Customs of his Church. To these he is bound by vows the most solemn to conform.

And where are we to look for unity and union, if we find it not here? And what terms of reprobation can be sufficiently strong to designate the conduct of those who, by causing discord among brethren who in principle are united, would thereby make music for our enemies? Alas! in every community such persons are found to exist, whose element is strife, who live by faction, who mistaking party spirit for Christian zeal, in their contest for what they allege to be truth, forget that Christianity is also a religion of Peace and Love. At the present time such persons are busy among ourselves; they avow their wish to prevent a union among the Clergy; in the bitterness of their spirit they conceive that the cause of Truth can only be supported by the formation of hostile confederacies within the Church; they glory in their unholy endeavours to arm brother against brother, and in the hope of waging a worse than civil war with the deadly weapons of theological hatred. Few in number, they would scarcely be deserving of notice, if, by anonymous misrepresentations, which

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ought never to be credited until they have been fully examined, and by exaggerations which, from their very absurdity, ought to excite the scepticism of charity, they had not partially succeeded in inflaming the passions and exciting the prejudices of many good and zealous, but ill-judging and mistaken men, who, instead of regarding measures, respect persons; who confound opinions with principles, and, in their attachment to phrases, forget the truth of things.

Now, such being the case, let us rip open the apple of discord which the enemies of peace would throw among us and see what it actually contains; let us briefly advert to the subjects most freely discussed among us, and sure I am that when we perceive how the case really stands, all moderate men, all who are not far gone in party spleen, will be ready to admit that, if in opinion upon several points we may some of us differ, there can be no just ground,—I do not say for the rancour which is sometimes exhibited in these discussions, for this can under no circumstances be justifiable,—but for the disturbance of that unanimity and christian harmony by the existence of which we are commanded to give proof that we are the Disciples of the Prince of Peace.

Let us take, in the first place, the subject of Tradition, and only assume, in charity, that the disputants on both sides are in their intention honest and conscientious Churchmen; men, that is to say, desirous of holding opinions in conformity with the principles of the English Church.

On the two great points which involve our common principle we are all agreed. We all of us hold, on the

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one hand, 'That holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation,' * and we all of us hold, on the other hand, that in all cases of difficulty or doubt we are to take for our guide the Ritual, Liturgy, Articles and Formularies of the Church of England. But here we are met by those who impugn our principle of interpretation, the Dissenters, whether Romish or Protestant, who very fairly demand why more deference should be paid to the English Church than to any of their own sects; to the English than to the foreign reformers; to Cranmer, Ridley, and Parker, than to Zuinglius, Calvin, or Beza; to this objection other answers may be given, but I only know of one which is of any weight, and which has always been adduced ever since the Reformation by all the divines who have adhered to the principles of the English Reformers.† Looking to the principles upon which the Reformation of the Church of England was

* Article VI.

† To those who are desirous of seeing how invariably this rule has been observed by our great standard writers, I may recommend 'The Judgment of the Anglican Church, posterior to the Reformation, on the sufficiency of the Holy Scripture and the authority of the Holy Catholic Church, in matters of faith,' by John F. Russell, B.C.L. of St. Peter's College, Cambridge. See also the incomparable Appendix to Bishop Jebb's Sermons; Churton's 'Church of England a Witness and Keeper of the Catholic Tradition;' Poole's very learned Sermons on the Creed; an admirable Discourse on Tradition, by Mr. Cartwright, Minister of the Jews' Episcopal Chapel; and Keble's Visitation Sermon.

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conducted, to the strict regard our reformers paid to the voice of antiquity, to their avowed determination to adhere to the unquestioned and unquestionable tradition of doctrine universally received, they contend, and affirm their readiness to prove, that in our Ritual, Liturgy, Articles, and Formularies, is embodied all that is essential of the traditional doctrine of the Universal Church; and that, therefore, in deferring to them, we defer not to the decision of a few individuals, but to the tradition universally received in those early ages, when, on all subjects relating to doctrine or to discipline a strict correspondence was kept up between all the branches of the Church Universal. And this tradition they regard, not as the Romanists regard their falsified traditions, as supplementary to Scripture, as conveying doctrines which are not contained in Scripture (for they subscribe to the 6th of our articles), but merely as confirmatory of the true meaning of Scripture, whenever Scripture is ambiguous or doubtful. Now this is, very possibly, in the minds of some, a bad answer to the Dissenter, an untenable defence, and anyone has a perfect right to supply us with a better if he can. But surely there is no ground for division, no ground here for our splitting into parties and factions, no ground for those fears which the wicked would suggest, and by which the weak are irritated. If those who contend for the authority of tradition contend at the same time that all necessary tradition is preserved in our Church, the very summit of their offending, so far as those who are *in* the Church are concerned, can only be an error in judgment, a mistake in opinion. By all parties within the pale,

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the same *principle* is recognized and acted upon; and the real debate is with those who are *without* the pale, who ridicule, as inconsistent and absurd, the deference which all clergymen acknowledge themselves bound to pay to the authoritative documents of the Church of England.

So again with respect to the Sacraments.* On this subject all must admit that the language of the Church of England is peculiarly strong. In her holy jealousy for the two divine ordinances of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, she withholds the title of Sacrament, in the sense she applies it to them, from all other religious rites, however sacred, however apostolical in their institution, however much the subordinate means of grace. She declares the Sacraments to be generally necessary to salvation, and she defines a Sacrament thus necessary to salvation, as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof,'—a means to convey grace, a pledge to assure the worthy recipient of its illation. Of Baptism she states the inward grace, of which it is the means, to be 'a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.'† She quotes the 3rd chapter of St. John,‡ in which the necessity of a *new*

* Note XI.

† There is a very strong single proof of the doctrine of the Church of England on Baptism pointed out by the present learned and pious Bishop of Bangor, that in Article IX. where the English is, 'there is no condemnation to them that believe and are *baptized*,' the Latin runs, '*renatis* et credentibus.'

‡ Bishop Kaye, in his Tertullian, p. 483, observes that the

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birth is asserted, as a chapter implying, on that account, 'the great necessity of Baptism where it can be had;' * in the Baptismal offices she expressly connects the regeneration of infants always, and of adults duly qualified, with Baptism; in the office for Confirmation she does the same; in the Homilies, the Font is designated as 'the Fountain of our Regeneration,' † while it is insinuated that by Baptism we are justified; ‡ and she teaches our children in the Catechism that they were at Baptism made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. With reference to the other sacrament, she asserts that the body of Christ is 'given, taken, received, and eaten in the Supper;' § the Eucharist she styles the Com-

ancients uniformly interpreted our Lord's address, in this chapter, to Nicodemus, as relating to baptism. This is also shown by Wall, in his history of Infant Baptism. Bishop Beveridge, as quoted by Bishop Mant, observes, 'What Christ means of being born of Water and of the Spirit, is *now* made a question: I say *now*, for it was never made so till of late years. For many ages together none ever doubted it, but the whole Christian world took it for granted that our Saviour meant only by these words, that except a man be baptized according to his institution, he cannot enter the kingdom of God: this being the most plain and obvious sense of the words, forasmuch as there is none other way of being born again of Water as well as of the Spirit, but only in the Sacrament of Baptism.'—*Bishop Beveridge's Works*, i. 304.

* Office for Adult Baptism.

† Homily for Repairing and Keeping Clean of Churches. See also Homily on Fasting.

‡ 'After that we are baptised OR justified.'—*3rd Part of Homily on Salvation.*

§ Article XXVIII. 'The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper is Faith.'

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munion (that is the communication) of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour. * And we are told, that those who are duly qualified, spiritually eat therein the flesh of Christ and drink his blood. † We are directed when we receive the Eucharist to pray to God to grant that we may 'so eat the flesh of his dear Son Jesus Christ and drink his blood that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood;' ‡ and 'that receiving the creatures of bread and wine we may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood.' § And after communicating, we thank God for that He doth 'vouchsafe to feed us with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.' ‖ In the Catechism, mention is made of the 'outward and visible *form*' of a sacrament, and in the homilies we find an allusion to our 'receiving our Lord's most blessed body and blood under the *form* of bread and wine;' ¶ and in the Homilies, we are also exhorted to hold that 'in the Supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent;' ** and we are told that the faithful 'receive not only the outward sacrament, but the spiritual thing also, not the figure but the truth, not the shadow but the body;' †† finally, our children are taught that the inward part of the Eucharist is 'the body and blood of Christ

* Exhortat. Com. Office. † Ibid.
‡ Prayer of Humble Access.
§ Consecration Prayer. ‖ Post Communion.
¶ Advertisement at the end of the First Book of Homilies.
** Hom. xxviii. †† Ibid.

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which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper.'* Now these expressions are so strong that many pious and well-meaning men have regarded them as sufficient to justify their secession from our communion; while more violent controversialists have not hesitated to denounce the English Church for retaining them, as semi-popish, if not absolutely papistical. They both censure our baptismal office and affirm that our doctrine of the Eucharist differs little, if at all, from the transubstantiation of the Romanist, or, at all events, from the consubstantiation of the Lutheran,—dogmas equally unphilosophical and unscriptural. The English Churchman, then, is here placed on the defensive, and the defence is conducted in two ways. Some persons admit (without questioning) the accuracy of our opponents in their notions of sacramental efficacy; and seeing the manifest and glaring inconsistency between our services and those notions, regret that our reformers retained the expressions objected to, but at the same time contend that they do not of necessity bear the construction which is generally placed on them, but admit of a restricted meaning, more conformable with the view of the objector. Others there are who receive these expressions in all the simplicity and fulness of their meaning, and, thinking that they are amply borne out by Scripture, maintain that the English Reformers, in the retention of them, used a wise discretion, and acted consistently on those Catholic principles to which they professed to adhere.

* Catechism.

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These assume the offensive against our common objectors, and show that, in confounding, as do the foreign reformers, regeneration with renovation,—a change of spiritual state, circumstances, and relations, and an election to grace, with a subsequent change of disposition, heart, and temper,—the objectors are themselves in error; and are equally unscriptural in the very low notions they entertain of the grace conveyed to the faithful in the other Sacrament. And thus—since no one but a man equally void of integrity, and regardless of the sanctity of an oath, would presume to alter our baptismal office or the Liturgy, to make them square with his private views—the only question among Churchmen is, whether the words we use in common will, or will not, by fair construction, bear the interpretation which some persons put upon them. If, after fair discussion, it is found they cannot,—of course, those who think that the expressions used in our offices are antiscriptural will quit our communion, and the discussion will then be one relating to principle, and the debate will be as to the meaning of the words of Scripture. Until it comes to this,—our differences of opinion ought surely not to lead to disunion among ourselves.

Come we now to the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession. On this subject no controversy existed at the time of the Reformation. It was, at that time, as it had been for 1,500 years, taken for granted that no man might presume to minister in sacred things, unless he were first appointed to the office by persons having authority to make the appointment by their regular succession from the Apostles. Upon this point no one is more eloquent

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or more decided than our reforming Archbishop, Dr. Cranmer.* Accordingly, when in the reign of Elizabeth the Thirty-nine Articles were agreed upon in a convocation of our clergy, the doctrine was assumed: 'It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or administering the Sacraments in the congregation before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in'—not by, but in—'the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.'† But the point being settled that there are some persons in the congregation or Church who have powers to ordain, the question is who those persons are? This was the question in debate at the Reformation, and it is easily answered so far as the Church of England is concerned, since it was settled, before the Thirty-nine Articles were received, in the ordinal in which it is affirmed: 'It is evident to all men diligently reading the Scriptures and the ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these three orders of ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.'‡ In the order for consecrating Bishops, as well as in the Ordination Service, she speaks of the offices of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons as offices divinely instituted; and, if instituted by God, of course they cannot be lawfully abolished. But it is a point not controverted, that wherever these officers exist, the power of ordination rests with the

* Note XII. † Article XXIII. ‡ Pref. to the Ordinal.

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first, assisted by the second. And accordingly, in legislating on this subject, the Church of England ordains that 'no one shall be accounted and taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon among us, or be suffered to execute any of the ministerial functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to our form of episcopal ordination, or hath had formerly episcopal consecration or ordination.'* A more complete answer to the question, 'who are they that have authority in the congregation?' could not be given by a Church which reverences Scripture and the ancient authors. And hence it is, that while a Minister of the Roman Church officiates among us, upon the renunciation of his errors, without a further ordination, a converted Presbyterian Minister is unable to do so. The one has had, the other has not had, episcopal ordination.

Now this regulation very naturally offends the various self-appointed ministers and teachers who have, of late years, abounded in the land. They accuse the Church of intolerance, bigotry, and illiberality, since they conclude that she implies, by this regulation, the invalidity of all but episcopal ordination: and in this conclusion they are the rather confirmed when they find our Canons, denouncing, as *ipso facto* excommunicated, not only those who affirm that the Church of England is not a true and apostolical Church,† or that the form of God's worship in the Church of England is corrupt,‡ but also those who, not being of the Church of England, challenge to themselves, in England, the name of true and lawful Churches.§ Under such a reproach

* Pref. to Ordinal. † Can. ii. ‡ Can. iv. § Can. xi.

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some of the members of our Church are impatient, and deny that the conclusion must of necessity be drawn. Others, rejoicing in everything to bear the scandal of the cross, admit the justness of the conclusion, but contend that the Church is no more to be blamed for this, than a mirror for the wrinkles or deformities it may bring to view. The Church injures no one by asserting the fact, for if it be a fact, a fact it is, whether she asserts it or not. It either is a fact that a society of believers, organized without the episcopal order, is not a Church, but merely a sect not organized according to apostolical and scriptural rule, as our Church insinuates, or it is not a fact. It is open to discussion whether it be a fact; there is no want of charity in our declaring what we believe to be such. As maintainers of God's truth we are to declare it in this as in every other instance, and in God's good time the truth will be known and recognized, and those who have deserted it will perceive that Christian unity is to be restored, not by our yielding to them, but by their returning to us. As we may preach that faith in the Lord Jesus is necessary to salvation, without denying the salvability of the heathen; so none will refuse to admire and reverence and love the pious and consistent Christian of every communion, whether Romish or Protestant; none—God forbid—will doubt of his being capable of salvation, though we may still believe that in many respects he may have fallen short of gospel truth. But be this as it may—it is a principle to be discussed with those who are in principle separated from us,—it is certainly no just cause of angry dispute among ourselves,

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who have declared our unfeigned assent and consent not only to our Articles, but to our ordination offices,—the first of which declare that those only may minister in sacred things who are duly ordained, and the second that those only are to be considered by us as duly ordained who have received episcopal orders. The only legitimate subject of discussion among us is, how are we to meet the objection to our principle as urged by Dissenters—a mere matter of opinion, not a fair plea for division.

I will only advert to one point more, and hasten to a conclusion. I allude now to the angry debates which contentious men would raise among us with reference to the Ceremonies of the Church. On this subject, too, we are in principle united. We all agree that forms and ceremonies are in themselves things indifferent, unless they have been divinely prescribed, as in the case of the Sacraments, and some of the Sacramentals. We are all of us also agreed in admitting that when we have solemnly vowed as bishops, priests, and deacons of the Church of England to adhere to the forms and ceremonies, rubrics, usages, and regulations of the Church of England, these ceremonies, relatively to us, cease to be things indifferent. If we make a vow, we are, of course, bound to keep it, and they, therefore, if such there be, who think that they show their wisdom by a studied disregard of the decent ceremonies of the Church, do, in reality, only show the little respect they have for their declarations and oaths. But it is notorious, from whatever circumstances, that since the Reformation, the ceremonies of the Church of

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England have been, in several respects, altered, either by the introduction of new practices, or by the neglect of old ones. For example, we find that metrical Psalms are now sung as a regular part of our service, of which they originally formed no portion.* This innovation is one of ancient date, and I am not complaining of it, but still it is an innovation, and like most innovations it has gradually led to another of a very questionable character: I allude to the introduction of unauthorised hymns of human composition. Another innovation since the time of our reformers is the use of extempore prayer before or after the sermon. Now these are very serious innovations, since they afford to an individual minister more liberty than the Church allows, and enable him to blend his private opinions with the acknowledged principles of the Church in such a manner as to confound the one with the other. Many other innovations of minor importance might easily be pointed out, such as the prevailing practice for the minister to turn in prayer to the people.† In the days of the reformers, and for some time after, the minister turned from the people in prayer, to them in exhortation, so that even by his action the people could distinguish between his address to them, and his address for them and with them to God;—they were continually reminded, by outward circumstances, of the holy duty in which they ought to be engaged. The innovation in this respect has likewise led to another, in that unsightly novelty a second pulpit,

* Note XIII. † Note XIV.

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which is now adopted in some sanctuaries, instead of the ancient fald-stool or low desk.* Among omissions, we may note that the people (in consequence, perhaps, of the former innovation), too generally sit, instead of kneeling, at prayer, and seldom bow at the name of the Lord Jesus;† while in some places we find that the clergy no longer say the Communion Service standing at the communion table, and the table is deprived of the candlesticks with which it is directed that it should be adorned.‡ Anthems are frequently discontinued, even in places where they sing; except when there is a Communion the offertory and prayer for the Church Militant are generally omitted, and several portions of the clerical habiliments § have fallen into disuse.

There are more serious omissions to which I will not now refer: such as the omission of the daily prayers, though every clergyman is directed to have them solemnized in his Church; such as the neglect of weekly Communions; such as the omission, when the Eucharist itself is administered, on the part of some of the clergy, to place the bread and wine, with their own hands, as an oblation on the altar, although at the last review of the Liturgy, a rubric was expressly and deliberately introduced to compel this observance; such as the neglect, on the part of others, to give that Sacrament with the words addressed to each individual communicant; for these are omissions of too serious a nature to come under the head of mere ceremonies. With respect to the other matters to which I have

* Note XV. † Note XVI. ‡ Note XVII. § Note XVIII.

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referred, I am perfectly ready to admit that many of them are, in themselves, of very little moment; but when we are solemnly pledged to conform to the ceremonies of the Church of England, the tender conscience will be apt to inquire what those ceremonies are to the observance of which we are thus bound. Now some are of opinion that they act sufficiently up to their vow, when they observe such ceremonies as they find handed down to them in the congregation over which they are appointed to preside. Others may be of opinion that the ceremonies ought to be observed precisely as they were originally appointed. A third party are of opinion, to which I myself incline, that they act in perfect consistency with their pledges if they take things as they find them, merely guarding against further innovations; and if, as occasion offers, they return more nearly to the practice of the reformers, which they rejoice to think is the practice also of the primitive Church. But here again the Protestant Dissenters are prepared to upbraid us. Our ceremonies and our ecclesiastical habits, and in great part our services themselves, are the same as those which are used by the Church of Rome, and therefore they accuse us of being papistical for retaining them. Here, then, we are again placed on the defensive, and how are we to defend ourselves? Some persons regret that so many of the old ceremonies were retained by our reformers, but defend them on the ground that they are not actually sinful, that in practice they have been much simplified, and they very properly conclude that it is better to observe them, since they are enjoined,

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than to commit schism. Others, on the contrary, defend us by acting again on the offensive: they accuse the sectarians in general of a want of due reverence for things sacred, a forgetfulness of the majesty of the Deity, who is approached too often in terms of ecstatic familiarity, amounting almost to profaneness; they appeal to the Scriptures which, while revealing to us the loving-kindness of our God, would at the same time impress our minds with a mysterious awe of Jehovah; and instead, therefore, of apologizing for our observances, they express their satisfaction that, by the solemnity of our services and the decorum of our ceremonies, the devotions of the Church are discriminated from the ranting and raptures of most modern sects. They may at the same time reverence our particular ceremonies as the relics of primitive devotion, and regard, with a sentiment akin to piety, what acts as one of the connecting links between us and our forefathers.* At the same time they carry out the principle of the English reformers, and perceive how the retention of the ancient ceremonies disarms the Romanist of one of his arguments. We tell the

* Thus our great reformer, Archbishop Parker, in his speech to the Convocation, speaks of our ceremonies:—'He had for exerting himself not only the precedent of the late martyrs of the Reformation, but of saints of the earliest antiquity; that some of these in the first centuries arrived in this island, and have left us noble remains of their piety and success; and notwithstanding the instructions they left, and the usages they settled, are partly worn out by time and superstition, yet many of them have had a more happy conveyance, and reached down to the present age; and that it appears our constitutions and ceremonies are little different from what was then established.'—*Collier*, pt. ii. bk. iv. 537. *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. ix. p. 364.

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Romanist that ours is the old Catholic Church of England—his, a new sect. And when he points to his ceremonies, as a badge of his antiquity, we can defy him to the proof, for, (more especially if our rubrics be duly observed,) we have in common with him the ancient ceremonies of the primitive Church, and where he differs from us, he almost always differs on matters subsequently introduced.

Now here is certainly room for some diversity of opinion, but surely, my brethren, there can be no room for that fierceness of controversy with which this subject is sometimes approached. For whether we estimate the value of our ceremonies too highly or too meanly, in principle we are all united;—the ceremonies of the Church of England must be observed because we are pledged to observe them, and the ceremonies of the Church of England only.

I am far from intending to say that in these differences of opinion there is nothing of importance. If we were assembled in Convocation, empowered to make further reforms in our Church, or to discuss the need of them, our opinions with respect to the value of tradition would be important in the extreme; so would be our opinions concerning the efficacy of the Sacraments, and the relative value of primitive Ceremonies, if we were reconstructing our Baptismal and Liturgical offices: nor of less importance would be our opinions on the Apostolical Succession, if the decision were to rest with us whether the Church should recognize the ministerial functions of men not episcopally ordained. But happily for us these questions have been decided

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for us by the Church, and to the decision of the Church, by the very fact of our being Churchmen, we unanimously bow; we receive her decisions as our common principle. The principles of the Church, as we have seen, form an insurmountable barrier between us and the Dissenter, both Romish and Protestant, and render union with either of those parties impossible. But to us Churchmen, surely our common principles—if we be not carnal men cherishing in our hearts bitter envying and strife—must be a common bond of union. But how can this union be preserved, unless, like the Church itself, while we are firm to our principles, we are tolerant towards the opinions of our brethren? The rule of the Church is indeed admirable. If any clergyman, either by his teaching or by his conduct, violate any principle of the Church, he ought to be accused to the Bishop,—to receive such accusations is indeed one of the purposes for which our Diocesan holds his court among us on such occasions as the present,—and if, after trial, the accused be found guilty he may be excommunicated and deposed. But the Church does not permit one preacher to pronounce a judgment, as it were *ex cathedrâ*, on another, to anathematize his opinions when he cannot canonically prove him to be guilty of heresy, or even officially to attempt the refutation of them; for our 53rd Canon enacts, 'If any preacher shall, in the pulpit, particularly or namely, of purpose, impugn or confute any doctrine delivered by any other preacher in the same Church, or in any Church near adjoining, before he hath acquainted the Bishop of the Diocese therewith, and

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received order from him what to do in that behalf,'— he shall be liable to suspension;* a regulation, this, obviously just and wise. We may descend from our official situation, and appear in the arena on equal terms as controversialists, if in opinion we unfortunately differ; but in this case, the one controversialist is not more infallible than the other, and if, *pendente lite*, one party takes upon him officially to give sentence on the other, what is this but a *petitio principii* as absurd as it is intolerant? In very truth, if each individual preacher were permitted thus to erect himself into an infallible Pope, fulminating his anathemas to the right hand and to the left, we should live for a time in a state of Ishmaelitish discord, when our hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against us, and at last we should subside into a despotism and tyranny worse than Rome ever invented or Geneva contemplated.

Needful it is to make these observations, since as I have hinted before, the worst part of the periodical and (so called) religious press, are by their misrepresentations inflaming the passions of weaker brethren in the ministry, and are calling upon them, under the pretence of speaking out for the truth, to violate the laws of the Church, and by turning it into the platform of angry contention, thus to desecrate the pulpit. Remember, brethren, that if the propagation of evangelic truth be one portion of our duty, it is no less our duty, by the sacrifice of all personal considerations,

* Note XIX.

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by the humiliation of our proud, the restraint of our angry, the denial of our selfish passions—by the due control even of our better emotions—to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Remember, brethren, that our enemies are many and mighty; the two extremes of Romanism and Ultra-Protestantism are banded, together with Infidelity, against us, and if, like Samson's foxes, they are pulling different ways, the brands which are attached to them have one and the self-same object—our destruction. And is this a time to divide our house, and to form parties and factions? Is this the season for discord? Remember, brethren, the ties, the sacred ties, which bind us to one another: as men, we are all under the same condemnation, we are all heirs of the same corrupted nature, equally one and all children of wrath: as Christians, we seek for reconciliation with an offended Maker, through the atoning merits and the all-prevailing intercession of the same crucified, the same glorified Saviour, through the sanctification of the same Blessed Spirit: we worship the same God, the Trinity in Unity. We are brethren of the same household, with one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all; ministers of Christ acting under the same apostolical commission, pledged all to walk by the same rule, and to speak the same thing; bound all by the same vows, with interests and pursuits, and duties, and privileges identical: where, I ask again, can Christian unanimity and harmony be found if we find it not here? 'Sirs, ye are Brethren,' Oh wrong not one another. 'Sirs, ye are Brethren,' and

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your Master is praying in heaven that ye may be one even as he is one with the Father. Oh seek not by your passions to frustrate his work. 'Sirs, ye are Brethren,'—as brethren let us act cordially together, and gradually our differences will lessen, our agreements will extend. Then shall we stand a holy army, closely embodied together, prepared with redoubled vigour to prosecute our warfare against the powers of darkness,—and then we shall find how sweeter than the ointment with which Aaron was anointed, how refreshing as the dews of Hermon, it is for brethren to dwell together in unity;—then the peace of God will rest upon us; that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

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SERMON V.

THE CHURCH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT.

'The Church was like a garden, in which things rank and gross in nature were running to seed: but they did not possess it wholly; it still produced beautiful flowers, and wholesome herbs and fruit. At the Reformation, wise men would have weeded the garden, but rash ones were for going to work with the plough and the harrow.'—SOUTHEY.

'*The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.*'—1 Tim. iii. 15.

By the Church is here meant that community of Christians, existing in its various branches, which was instituted by our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, and by Him placed under the superintendence of the Apostles and their successors.

Of the commission of all the Apostles, except St. Paul, we read in the Gospels. There we see that, as the Father sent the Lord Jesus in His character of the Messiah, so did the Lord Jesus in that character send His Apostles.* To them He appointed a kingdom, even as the Father had appointed a kingdom to Him.† And having previously commissioned them to consecrate the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and to celebrate that ordinance in remembrance of Him, He left them,

* St. John xx. 21. † St. Luke xxii. 29.

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as His last injunction—just before He went up on high to receive good gifts for men—this command:—'Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.'*

Our Saviour at the same time added:—'And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen!'—that is to say, He would be with them in these their ministrations, co-operating with them by His Spirit. But this He could not be, if His promise were intended only to include the eleven persons to whom He immediately spake. For these persons, instead of abiding till the end of the world, in due course went the way of all flesh. Our Lord must, therefore, have meant, what the Church has always understood Him to mean, that He would be present with that body of men whom He thus incorporated and commissioned to act as His ministers and as the rulers of the Church. Individuals were to pass away, but, by a constant succession of members, the commissioned body was to continue, and, so continuing, to be blessed with His spiritual presence.

That the eleven who were first commissioned by our Lord thus understood their commission is clear, since the very first thing they did was to exercise the privilege, which their commission implied, of adding to their number. They determined to make up their number to twelve (the apostate Judas having forfeited

* St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

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his bishopric); and for this purpose they selected Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias. And God sanctioned their proceeding by interfering by miracle, on their supplication, to point out which of the two should be consecrated.

The fact to which I have alluded, and which is recorded in the first chapter of the Acts, is important on two considerations; first, it shows that the Apostles understood our Lord's commission not to be confined to those to whom it was immediately addressed, but to embrace also their successors; and, secondly, since they performed this act before the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, it is obvious that they made a distinction between that commission, which they received only in common with the other Bishops of the Church, and that miraculous power which was conferred upon them to enable them to execute their commission under circumstances of peculiar difficulty.

To the number of commissioned ministers of Christ, our Lord Himself added the great Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul. The divine Head of the Church, the blessed Jesus, has a right to send on an extraordinary mission whom He will; and we should never reject any one who should come among us so commissioned. Only, as when St. Paul was commissioned, out of due course, the commission was notified by miracle, so should we say to any one who pretended that he had received a command from on high to minister in sacred things, and that he was thus exempted from the usual form of ordination conferred by the successors of the

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Apostles:—'It may be as you say, but, before we admit your pretensions, let a miracle be performed, to convince us that God Himself has sanctioned so great an exception to the general rule which He has Himself laid down.'

Of the early growth and progress of the Church, (that community of Christians placed by our Lord under the superintendence of the Apostles and their successors) we read in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the apostolic Epistles.

The Apostles went into all nations, as they were commanded, and preached Christ crucified; but not only this: wheresoever they went they at the same time established the kingdom of Christ by organizing the Church. The conduct of the Son of God was in no respect more distinguished from that of the celebrated heathen philosophers than in this—that they, when they had broached their tenets, took no steps for the promulgation of them; whereas, He, by instituting His Sacraments, and ordaining a body of men whose business to the end of time will be to administer them, has secured for ever, even by human means, the promulgation of the two great truths of His religion, a belief in the atonement and in the necessity of grace. Thus the Apostles, in every place to which they went, not only preached the Gospel, but ordained an order of men, with powers inferior to their own, and without permission to add to their numbers, whose office it was and still is to preach the Gospel, to offer the prayers of the people, to bless in God's name, and to administer both the Sacraments. These men were called Presby-

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ters (contracted into Priests), and sometimes Bishops—not meaning by that title what we now mean, but simply a superintendent of a single congregation. To assist these, with more limited powers, they also appointed Deacons. Hence we find the early Churches thus constituted: there was a baptized people, to minister among whom Presbyters and Deacons were appointed, while over the whole body the Apostle who first founded the Church presided as what we should now call the Bishop. He visited this Church (as our Bishops in these days visit the Churches under them) as circumstances required; and if detained from them long, he was accustomed to send to them his directions by letter. Thus the Epistles of St. Paul are, most of them, letters addressed by the inspired writer, in his character of Apostle or Bishop, to the Churches under his superintendence.

Some persons seem to think that the government of the Church was essentially different in the days of the Apostles from what it is now, because they do not find the names and titles of the ecclesiastical officers precisely the same. For instance, as I have just said, he whom we now call a Presbyter or Priest was frequently styled in the New Testament a Bishop. But it is not for names that we contend. We ask what was the fact, and the fact was this: that the officer whom we now call a Bishop was at first called an Apostle, although afterwards it was thought better to confine the title of Apostle to those who had seen the Lord Jesus, while their successors, exercising the same rights and authority, though unendowed with miraculous powers,

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contented themselves with the designation of Bishops. After this, the title was never given to the second order of the ministry. In the New Testament we find each Church (as I have just said, and now, on account of the importance of the subject, repeat) thus constituted:—there was an Apostle to superintend it, Presbyters and Deacons under him, and the company of believers; the only difference is that, instead of calling him that presides over any particular branch of the Church an Apostle, we now call him a Bishop. And such rulers, descending from the Apostles, the true Church has ever possessed from the ascension of our blessed Saviour to the present hour; for the earliest uninspired writer we have—a disciple of St. John himself—states it as an acknowledged rule in his day, that nothing was to be done without the sanction of the Bishop.

In this manner was the Church originally formed. It extended itself into several branches, and each branch continuing not only in the Apostles' doctrine, but in their fellowship, was called a distinct Church. We read of the Church at Jerusalem, the Church of the Thessalonians, the Church of Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Pergamos, and Thyatira, and Sardis, and Philadelphia, and Laodicea. In one sense, they were separate Churches, as each was complete in itself under its Bishop (called by St. John its Angel); in another sense, the Church was one, inasmuch as in all its branches the same doctrines were professed, the same episcopal discipline observed:—'There was one body and one spirit, even as they were called in one hope of their

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calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all.' *

The Church, so constituted by our Lord, and governed by the Apostles and those Bishops, their successors, to whom our Lord's commission applied equally with the Apostles themselves—the Church so constituted was open universally to all persons of all nations, and was not confined, as was the Jewish Church, to a single people. It was, therefore, called Catholic, or universal. But against the doctrine or discipline of this Apostolic Church, numerous sects professing to believe in Christ soon arose. These sects were generally distinguished by the names of their founders, whereas the true Church rejected any designation that seemed to confine it exclusively to one party or place. But, as some designation was necessary, it was usually known by the name of the Catholic Church of such or such a place. And consequently the word Catholic, in process of time, came to signify, not universal, but true. The ancient ecclesiastical writers almost invariably use it in this sense—namely, to denote the Church, which, in any place, by the succession of its Bishops, has come down in regular descent from the first Apostles, as contradistinguished from all other sects. Those persons are consequently in error who would use the term Catholic to denote an amalgamation of all sects, for the term was in the first ages always used to distinguish the true Church from

* Ephesians, iv. 5.

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sectarian congregations; and those are still more in error who speak of the Papists as Catholics. If you call the Romish sect in this country the Catholic Church, you as much as say that it is the true Church. The Catholic Church means the true Church of Christ, holding the Apostolic doctrine, and governed by Bishops descending regularly from the Apostles—and a Catholic Church means a branch of that true Church.

These Churches, descending from the Apostles, have continued to the present day. They are to be found in the east and in the west, and against them, forming the one Church of Christ, we know that the gates of hell will not prevail. But among the Churches great errors have prevailed, and in some of them they still exist. These great errors, which call out for reformation, do not prevent such Churches from being true Churches, for he is still a true man whose face is besmeared with dirt, and the diamond is still a diamond though covered with dust. Against the Churches, to which St. John, in the Apocalypse, was directed to address himself, the Divine had many things to write; but, while he threatened punishment, he did not pronounce them to be no true Churches.

In this country—and it is with our own country that we are concerned—a true branch of the Catholic Church has existed from the remotest antiquity. Bishops from Britain sat in some of the earliest councils: and the Prelates, who at this present time rule the Churches of these realms, were validly ordained by others, who, by means of an unbroken spiritual descent of ordination, derived their mission from the Apostles

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and from our Lord. This continual descent is evident to every one who chooses to investigate it. Let him read the catalogues of our Bishops ascending up to the most remote period. Our ordinations descend in a direct unbroken line from Peter and Paul, the Apostles of the Circumcision and the Gentiles. These great Apostles successively ordained Linus, Cletus, and Clement, Bishops of Rome; and the Apostolic succession was regularly continued from them to Celestine, Gregory, and Vitalianus, who ordained Patrick Bishop for the Irish, and Augustine and Theodore for the English. And from those times, an uninterrupted series of valid ordinations has carried down the Apostolical succession in our Churches to the present day. There is not a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, among us, who cannot, if he please, trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul.*

That in the Church of England purity of doctrine was not always retained is readily admitted. In the dark ages, when all around was dark, the Church itself suffered from the universal gloom: this neither our love of truth nor our wishes will permit us to deny. About the seventh century the Pope of Rome began to establish an influence and interest in our Church. The interference of the Prelate of that great See, before he laid claim to any dominion of right, was at first quite justifiable, and did not exceed the just bounds, while it contributed much to the propagation of the Gospel. That the Bishop of Rome

* Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. p. 219.

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was justified in endeavouring to aid the cause of Christianity here in England, when England was in heathen darkness, will not be disputed by those who recognize the same right in the Archbishop of Canterbury with respect to India at the present time. But in after ages, what was at first a justifiable interference was so increased as to become an intolerable usurpation. This authority was an usurpation, because it was expressly contrary to the decisions of a general council of the Church, and such as the Scripture condemns, in that the Scripture places all Bishops on an equality, and so they ought to continue to be, except where, for the sake of order, they voluntarily consent to the appointment of a President or Archbishop, who is nothing more than a *primus inter pares.* This usurpation for a time continued, and with it were introduced various corruptions, in doctrine as well as in discipline.

At length, in the reign of Henry VIII. the Bishops and Clergy accorded with the laity and government of England, and threw off the yoke of the usurping Pope of Rome. They, at the same time, corrected and reformed all the errors of doctrine, and most of the errors of discipline which had crept into our Church during the reign of intellectual darkness. They condemned the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, the worship of saints and images, communion in one kind, and the constrained celibacy of the Clergy, having first ascertained that these and similar errors were obtruded into the Church in the middle ages. They did not attempt to make new, their object was

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to reform, the Church. They stripped their venerable mother of the meretricious gear in which Superstition had arrayed her, and left her in that plain and decorous attire with which, in the simple dignity of a matron, she had been adorned by the Apostolic hands.

Thus, then, you see ours is the old Church of England, tracing its origin, not to Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley, who only reformed it—but the only Church of England, which traces its origin up through the Apostles, to our Saviour Himself. To adopt the words of the most learned and pious writer to whom I have before referred: 'The orthodox and undoubted Bishops of Great Britain and Ireland are the only persons who in any manner, whether by ordination or possession, can prove their descent from the ancient saints and Bishops of these Isles. It is a positive fact, that they, and they alone, can trace their ordinations from Peter and Paul, through Patrick, Augustine, Theodore, Colman, Columba, David, Cuthbert, Chad, Anselm, Osmund, and all the other worthies of our Church.' * 'It is true that there are some schismatical Romish Bishops in these realms, but they are of a recent origin, and cannot show the prescription and possession that we can. Some of these teachers do not profess to be Bishops of our Churches, but are titular Bishops of places we know not. Others usurp the titles of various Churches in these Islands, but are neither in possession themselves nor can prove that their predecessors ever occupied them. The Sect (the sect of English Papists

* *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. p. 252.

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or Roman Catholics) arose in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when certain persons, unhappily and blindly devoted to the See of Rome, refused to obey and communicate with their lawful pastors, who, in accordance with the law of God and the canons, asserted the ancient independence of the British and Irish Church: and the Roman Patriarch then ordained a few Bishops to Sees in Ireland, which were already occupied by legitimate pastors. In England, this ministry is of later origin; for the first Bishop of that communion was a titular Bishop of Chalcedon in the seventeenth century.' *

You see, then—and in these days it is particularly necessary to bear the fact in mind—that ours is the old Catholic Church of England; a Church which traces its origin to the Apostles and our Lord; a Church which in the dark ages laboured under abuses and corruptions, which were removed under the Episcopates of Archbishop Cranmer and Archbishop Parker. Nothing can be more mistaken than to speak of these great men as the founders of our Church. One only is our founder, and that is Christ. And as well might we say of a man when he has washed his face that he is not the same man as he was before his ablution, as to say of the Church of England that she is a different Church since the Reformation from what she was before.

* *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. p. 251. The reader is referred to this most interesting and satisfactory work, if he wish to see the statements here made established and proved. See also Rose's admirable 'Discourses on the Commission and Consequent Duties of the Clergy;' and Discourse 7, vol. i. of the 'Practical Theology' of the truly apostolical Bishop Jebb—*νῦν ἐν ἁγίοις*.

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You will observe how important all this is which I have now laid before you. Unless Christ be spiritually present with the ministers of religion in their services, those services will be vain. But the only ministration to which He has promised His presence is to those of the Bishops who are successors of the first commissioned Apostles, and the other clergy acting under their sanction and by their authority.

I know the outcry which is raised against this—the doctrine of the Christian Church for 1,800 years—I know the outcry that is raised against it by those sects which can trace their origin no higher than to some celebrated preacher at the Reformation But I disregard it, because I shall, by God's help, continue to do, what I have done ever since I came among you—namely, declare the whole counsel of God, without regard to consequences or respect of persons, and, at the same time, as far as in me lies, live peaceably with all men.

But, after all, the outcry is most unjust. We seek not to condemn others, though we maintain that ours is the only right path. There is no precept of the Gospel more important than this—'Judge not, that ye may not be judged.' If a man err through ignorance, ignorance such as he has had no means to remedy, we may surely suppose that his ignorance will be pardoned, and that God, though he have not promised to be so, may yet be with him. Or, again, the same may be supposed when necessity is laid on us, when a man, for instance, lives where no true Church exists, or

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where the true Church is so corrupted as to render communion with it impossible.*

* Although with foreign reformers we, of the Church of England, have no immediate concern, it is important to know that, where episcopacy was not retained, the reformers pleaded not principle, but necessity. 'How Calvin stood affected in the said point of episcopacy, and how gladly he and other heads of the reformed Churches would have received it, is evident enough from his writings and epistles. In his Book of the Necessity of Reforming the Church, he hath these words: "*Talem nobis hierarchiam exhibeant*, &c.:—Let them give us such an hierarchy, in which Bishops may be so above the rest as they refuse not to be under Christ, and depend upon Him as their only head, that they maintain a brotherly society, &c. If there be any that do not behave themselves with reverence and obedience towards them, there is no anathema, but I confess them worthy of it." But especially his opinion of episcopacy is manifest from a letter he, and Bullinger, and others, learned men of that sort, wrote, anno 1549, to King Edward VI., offering to make him their Defender, and to have Bishops in their Churches for the better unity and concord among them; as may be seen in Archbishop Cranmer's Memorials, and likewise by a writing of Archbishop Abbot, found among the MSS. of Archbishop Usher, which, for the remarkableness of it, and the mention of Archbishop Parker's papers, I shall here set down. "Perusing some papers of our predecessor, Matthew Parker, we find that John Calvin, and others of the Protestant Churches of Germany and elsewhere, would have had episcopacy, if permitted; but could not on several accounts, partly fearing the Princes of the Roman Catholic faith would have joined with the Emperor and the rest of the popish Bishops to have depressed the same; partly being newly reformed and not settled, they had not sufficient wealth to support episcopacy, by reason of their daily persecutions. Another and a main cause was they would not have any popish hands laid over their Clergy. And whereas John Calvin had sent a letter, in King Edward the Sixth's time, to have conferred with the Clergy of England about some things to this effect, two Bishops, viz. Gardiner and Bonner, intercepted the same; whereby Mr. Calvin's overture perished. And he received an answer, as if it had been from the reformed divines of those times, wherein they checked him, and slighted his proposals; from which time John Calvin and the Church of England were at variance on

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In this respect, as in every other, we may look for our guidance to the conduct of our blessed Lord Himself. When conversing with the woman of Samaria, He did not compromise the truth, at a time when the Jewish mode of worship was divinely appointed and established, by letting her suppose that it was a thing indifferent whether men worshipped at Mount Gerizim or on Mount Moriah. But, when implying that men, at that period, ought to have worshipped at Jerusalem, He, nevertheless, did not treat as a heathen one who acknowledged Jehovah for her God, or censure as a schismatic one who continued to worship, through want of better information, where her fathers had worshipped before her. And thus it is possible for us to maintain that the Church is the only Christian community in these realms which can prove that it possesses the promise of Christ's presence in her services and Sacraments, and yet we may hope and believe that the blessings of His presence, though unpromised, may still be vouchsafed to all those who devoutly worship Him in sincerity, though they hold not, as we conceive, the whole truth as it is in Jesus. It is in Sion only that God appears in perfect beauty, though we admit He may manifest Himself elsewhere. Ours is the only path that can be proved to be the right one; but there may be many by-paths, through

several points, which otherwise, through God's mercy, had been qualified, if those papers of his proposals had been discovered unto the Queen's majesty during John Calvin's life. But, being not discovered until or about the sixth year of her majesty's reign, her majesty much lamented they were not found sooner."'—*Strype's Life of Archbishop Parker.*

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which, though with greater difficulty, the traveller may arrive at the same destination, where, blessed be the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall all speak the same thing, and, there being no divisions among us, we shall be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and the same judgment. *

There is indeed such a sin as schism. Yet, as the Church has never attached the notion of heresy to error, not factiously and pertinaciously maintained, so we may believe that the conscientious dissenter is not guilty of schism when he does not act with a schismatic intent.

But although it seemed well to me to offer these explanations, I wish to remind you that with the judging of others we have nothing to do. God is our judge, not we. Our business is, as regards ourselves, to prove all things, and to cleave to that which is good. At a period when the principles of toleration were little understood, and when the Puritan condemned the Papist, in language not less strong than that which the Papist employed when dealing out his anathemas against the Protestant, it was asked of a distinguished individual 'whether a Papist could be saved.' And very wise was his answer:—'You may be saved without knowing that—look to yourself'—† "What is that to thee?" says our Saviour: "follow thou me." ‡

And if to ourselves, my brethren, we do look, let

* 1 Corinthians i. 10.

† Sir Henry Wotton. Wordsworth's Eccles. Biog. vol. v. p. 43.

‡ St. John xxi. 22.

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us consider seriously and solemnly the increased responsibility which results from our greater advantages in being members of a true reformed Catholic Church. Whatever may be the case with others, if we neglect so great salvation (on the principle that from him to whom much is given much will be demanded), as we shall be without excuse, so will our condemnation be the more severe. But let us dwell not on the terrors but on the consolations of our Sion. To us pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants, and the service of God, and the promises, and the Sacraments, and among us, beyond reasonable doubt, Christ dwells, who is God blessed for ever. Delightful thought, with which to enter the sanctuary and to approach the pulpit, the altar, or the font!—Delightful thought, with which to worship in the beauty of holiness, and to pour forth the soul in those self-same prayers through which, for at least fifteen centuries, the hearts of saints have winged their way to heaven!—Delightful thought, while with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, we unite with the Church triumphant in ascribing to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, blessing, and honour, and glory and power!

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SERMON VI.

THE CHURCH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT.

'Whoever attentively considers the subject will find that troubles in Church and State usually come to a crisis at the same time. Either originating in the same cause, or the immediate consequence the one of the other, sometimes the calamities of the Church lead the way to commotions in the State, while at other times it is just the reverse. So that I cannot imagine that this interchangeable course of things is the effect of mere accident; but I apprehend rather that these troubles are to be traced to our iniquities, of which they may be considered as the punishment.'—SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS, A.D. 439.

'*And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.*'—Isaiah xlix. 23.

ON a former occasion we traced the history of the Church through the succession of its Bishops, up to its origin in the commission given by our Lord to the Apostles and their successors. Now that branch of the Church which exists in this country has always been connected with, and closely allied to, the State. Although we know little of its history before the conversion of the Saxons, there are good grounds for supposing such to have been the case, even with respect to the British Church; while nothing can be more certain than that the conversion of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors was a national one.

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When the Anglo-Saxons conquered the Britons, they were heathens, and, persecuting the Church, either drove the professors of Christianity to the mountains of Wales or reduced them to a state of slavery. By that moral alchemy, through which Divine Providence converts evil into good, the latter circumstance prepared the way for the conversion of the conquerors, who, seeing the pious and regular deportment of their slaves, soon learned to respect their religion. We may gather this fact from a letter written by Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, in the sixth century, to two of the kings of France, in which he states that the English nation was desirous of becoming Christian, and in which he, at the same time, complains to those monarchs of the remissness of their Clergy in not seeking the conversion of their neighbours. And hence it was that Gregory, with that piety and zeal for which he was pre-eminently distinguished, sent over Augustine and about forty missionaries to England, to labour in this good work. The success of these missionaries, the way having thus been paved before them, was most satisfactory. They converted Ethelbert, who was not only king of Kent, but Brætwalda, or chief of the Saxon monarchs. His example was soon followed by the kings of Essex and East Anglia, and gradually by the other sovereigns of England.

The successful Augustine then went over to Arles, in France, where he was consecrated by the prelate of that See; and returning, became the first Archbishop of Canterbury, the patriarch and metropolitan of the Church of England. His See was immediately endowed

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with large revenues by King Ethelbert, who likewise established, at the instance of the Archbishop, the dioceses of Rochester and London. The other kings of the heptarchy erected bishoprics equal to the size of their kingdoms. And the example was followed by their nobles, who converted their estates into parishes, erecting fit places of worship, and endowing them with tithes.* This fact accounts for the unequal size of our dioceses and parishes: the first were (though subsequently subdivided) of the same extent as the dominions of their respective kings; the second corresponded with the estate of the patron. Nor was the regard of those by whom the Church was established and endowed confined to the spiritual edification of the poor. No; they knew that righteousness exalteth a nation, and, estimating properly the advantages of infusing a Christian spirit into the legislature, they summoned the higher order of the Clergy to take part in the national councils.

Thus was the Church established and the State

* The property of the Church remains with those who have descended in an unbroken line from the Clergy to whom it was originally granted. If our title be disputed, it devolves upon the adversary to establish a prior claim. This the Protestant dissenter does not attempt to do; and with respect to Roman Catholic dissenters, we know that, instead of being descended from the original grantees, their line of succession began at Rome scarcely more than two centuries ago. Nor can they claim on the ground of greater similarity of doctrine. For transubstantiation, the worship of saints and images, half communion, constrained celibacy, &c., the doctrines and practices which distinguish the modern Romish sect, were unknown to the Anglo-Saxon Church. Admitting, then, that we may differ in some particulars of practice from our ancestors, yet certainly we do not differ from them so much as the modern Romanist.

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consecrated. For many years, there appears to have continued a good understanding between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the powers of which were, in most respects, as in these days, blended. But, after the moral world had been subdued, and papal tyranny had been established, by the marvellous energies of Hildebrand, his crafty successors, the Popes of Rome, soon perceived that, in order to secure their dominion, it was important, as far as possible, to sever the alliance which had hitherto subsisted between the Church and the State. Representing the Church as independent, they regarded the King as the head of the State, and the Pope as supreme of the Church. No sectarian of the present day can be more hostile to an alliance between Church and State than were those divines who, in the middle ages, were devoted to the Popedom. Although the Pope, however, had, here in England as elsewhere, many creatures and advocates, yet many and manful were the repulses he met with from our Clergy, our Kings, and the People. His authority, indeed, was in this realm a mere assumption, for he was never elected by any synod of our Church as its head. Still, assuming rights to which he could lay no lawful claim, his usurpations were continued until, in the reign of Henry VIII. the Clergy, the Monarch, and the People could bear the tyranny no longer, but, throwing off the yoke, declared that the Pope was not the head of the Church of England, but that, in these realms, the King is, as in times past he was, over all persons, and in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, in these his dominions, supreme.

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This was the first step towards a reformation. Various other abuses were then corrected, as we have before pointed out; and our doctrines, as well as our services, were brought back to that primitive simplicity and solemnity in which we now find them. The Church (not made new, but canonically reformed) still continued to be allied with the State, and has remained from that day to this—except for a short period during the Rebellion—established.

Such is the fact, and the history of the fact. The Church in this country has come down to us established and endowed. And the first question to be asked is, whether in this alliance between Church and State there be anything unscriptural and unholy. If there be, let the text of Scripture be cited which prohibits this connection. Where is it? Observe, we do not say that the Church must be established, so that unless it were established it would cease to be a Church. God forbid! We only say that it may be established—that there is nothing in Scripture to forbid its establishment, where its establishment can be accomplished. In the United States of America a branch of the reformed Catholic Church is existing, and I am happy to say flourishing, under the government of many orthodox Bishops. Now, this Church is not recognized by the State. It is not established. But we do not object to it on that account. We acknowledge it to be a true and most pure branch of the Church of Christ, and we watch with fraternal affection its pre-eminence and its progress. We do not, therefore, say that the Church must be established—the only question, I repeat, is,

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whether, where we find it allied, as in this country it is, with the State, there is anything unlawful in such alliance. And again I say that the *onus probandi* lies with the adversary. Where, I ask, is there anything that condemns the establishment of the Church of Christ as the national religion? I am, of course, aware that reference is sometimes made to the eighteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, where our Lord declares, 'My kingdom is not of this world;' but that, I conceive, is always done for the sake more of popular declamation than of solid argument. For it is clear, from the context, that this passage cannot be made to say anything, either one way or the other, with respect to a national establishment. It had been represented to Pontius Pilate that the Lord Jesus, by claiming to be a king, was an enemy to Cæsar. In order to ascertain the truth of this accusation, the Roman governor demanded of our Lord, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' In answering in the affirmative, the blessed Jesus, to guard against misconception, adds:—'My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence.'* It is difficult to force any other meaning from this passage, considered as an answer to Pilate's question, than this: 'I am a king, but not such a king as Cæsar need to fear; in proof that I do not wish to dethrone him, or to interfere with the powers that be, I refer to the fact that I have not commanded my servants to fight for me.'

* John xviii. 36.

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If to establish—ay, or to un-establish—the Church we were to have recourse to weapons of carnal warfare and to seek a revolution, as the Presbyterians did in the reign of Charles the First, I can then understand how we might violate the principle implied in this text; but it is impossible to conceive how, by any process of sophistry, it can be interpreted as condemning the civil magistrate when he offers, or the ecclesiastical magistrate when he accepts, an alliance between Church and State for the purpose of benefiting those who are the subjects of both. At all events, it is not from one text of very doubtful meaning that a wise man will start such an objection as this; he will rather feel surprise, if the establishing of the Church as a national religion be so heinous an offence as some persons would represent, that our Lord did not condemn it in the very strongest terms. For we know that, among the Jews, the State and the Church were closely united; that the Jewish Church was as much established in Palestine as the Christian Church is in England; and that, moreover, this union between Church and State was instituted by God himself. The Apostles, therefore, could not have considered an established religion as a thing, in itself, unlawful. That they themselves made no attempt to establish Christianity is most true; but then it is to be remembered that no nations were, at that period, converted. What would have been their conduct had an opportunity offered of grafting Christianity upon the civil institutions of the heathen world neither we nor our opponents can decide. Their example, therefore, can

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be urged by neither party, since they had no opportunity of acting.

And now, having seen that there is nothing to be urged from Scripture by the religionist against a union with the civil power, it only remains to consider what are the advantages of the union. Whatever may be the theories of the political economist of the present day, the ancient lawgivers considered religion to be of such importance, as bearing even on the temporal welfare of society, that they actually preferred a false religion to none. It was the remark of a celebrated historian, that Rome was indebted for her glory to the prevalence, in her best days, of Superstition—meaning by superstition a feeling of religion, though directed to a wrong object.* But superstition is like a statue too massive

* Polybius, 1. 6. p. 497. The whole passage is curious:—'The greatest advantage,' says he, 'which the Roman government seems to have over other states, is in the opinion publicly entertained by them about the gods; and that very thing which is decried by other mortals, sustained the Republic of Rome—I mean, Superstition;—for this was carried by them to such a height, and introduced so effectually both into the private lives of the citizens and the public affairs of the city, that one cannot help being surprised at it.' 'It was not without great prudence and foresight that the ancients took care to instil into them these notions of the gods and infernal punishments, which the moderns, on the other hand, are now rashly and absurdly endeavouring to extirpate.' How would this historian have felt had he known of a religion adapted equally to the wants of the most learned philosopher and the most unlettered peasant, in which a Newton and a cottager may find subjects for study, in which, to use the expression of one of the Fathers, while there are shallows which a lamb may ford, there are depths where an elephant must swim! Christianity, so far as religion is concerned, has utterly abolished the doctrine of expediency, and in its stead established truth as the sole object which the religionist is to have in view. This is a blessed and a glorious fact. But it seems irrational to fall

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for the pedestal on which it is placed; and, as civilization advances, it soon falls into ruin. Its absurdities are detected, and the conclusion is hastily drawn that because one system of religion is proved to be false, no system of religion can be proved to be true. Among the heathens, therefore, a religious feeling never existed, for any length of time, as an influential principle. And the consequence was that in the heathen world, that greatest of all earthly blessings, civil liberty, was utterly unknown. For real freedom we are indebted to Christianity, which alone could make religion to be not an idle theory, but an abiding conviction. By an armed oligarchy, the greater part of the operatives in the heathen world were kept in a state of slavery, the abolition of which was a subject on which the most benevolent of philosophers could scarcely dare to dream. How impossible it is for a society of men, with equal rights, to exist without the restraints of religion, may be seen in what took place in France during the first revolution. Religion being regarded as a thing of naught, the wild passions of men burst forth in all their ferocity; the land was full of blood, and the city was full of perverseness; and, the experiment having been made, even Infidels bore testimony to the blessings---I mean the temporal blessings—of Christianity, by re-establishing its institutions, though, judicially blind themselves, they embraced not its doctrines. And the

into the opposite extreme; and because the heathen philosophers supported a false religion through expediency, not to observe the tendency of the true religion, while affording grace for the renovation of the hearts of individuals, to confer at the same time, indirectly, the most important temporal benefits on society.

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reason of this is obvious: the statesman can only legislate for society in the mass; it is the minister of religion who applies to individual cases those principles upon which all sound legislation is founded; while the former looks to the bare fact, the latter is probing the motive; while the human lawgiver can only say, 'Thou shalt not steal,' it is the Divine Lawgiver who adds, 'Thou shalt not covet;' the law of the land can only guard against the effects of passion; to subdue the passions themselves belongs to divine grace; the civil magistrate can do little more than become a terror to the evil doer; the rewards of the humble and the righteous are administered by that faith which realizes the joys of eternity, and secures, at the time present, the peace which passes all understanding; laws of perfect obligation fall under the province of the legislature; those higher laws of imperfect obligation are enforced by the Church: the civil authorities may govern man, as a selfish, money-getting, ambitious creature: it is Christianity alone which can foster and bring to maturity the generous principles of courtesy, benevolence, and charity, which can elevate us to all that is high and honourable in sentiment, all that is disinterested in conduct, and amiable in feeling.

It is true that, to a certain extent, much of this might be accomplished even though the Church were not established. Religion would still have its influence. I will go even further, and add that, so far as regards those who are Churchmen in deed and in truth, the Church itself would be benefited by a separation from the State: for it would regain those undoubted rights

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from which, for the sake of harmony, she now recedes—the right, for instance, of legislating for herself, on all occasions, and of electing Bishops without the interference of the civil power. The question with the legislator is not whether the Church would do much good, though unconnected with the State, but whether, by an alliance therewith, it cannot do more good: and the question with the Churchman is, whether, for placing in abeyance some of its spiritual rights, the Church does not receive compensation by the indirect influence it is enabled to exert. The Church may be less free, but is it not more efficient? The Church may be unduly controlled in the exercise of its authority over its own members, but does it not possess greater means of purifying society?—and to purify society, to act as the salt of the earth, is one of the purposes for which the Church was instituted. It is not, indeed, as Churchmen but as patriots that we deprecate the desecration of the State; that is to say, we deprecate it for the sake, not of those that are within the pale, but of those that are without; we deprecate it, not because the Church would be a less efficient minister of grace to the faithful, if, driven from her glorious cathedrals, she summoned her children around her in the upper room of a hired house, or the caves of the desert; but because she would be a less effectual preacher of morality to the unenlightened and the unbeliever. Her voice would still be the voice of the charmer when heard, but it would not reach so far. When men are once awakened to a vital sense of religion, when its blessings, its holy consolations, and heavenly joys,

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have been kindled in the heart, they need not an establishment, for they will never be without the ordinances and sacraments of the Church from whence those blessings flow; but, were there no establishment, how would it fare with those who, not knowing its consolations, are naturally averse from its restraints? The strong would have their meat; but how would the babes be supplied with milk? To those who truly believe, 'beautiful will be the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things;' but concerning others we may ask, 'how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?'* Will individual zeal suffice?—Alas! the zeal of individuals soon waxes cold when all cause of opposition is removed. It is, at all events, hard to conceive why the case should be different with us from what it is in the United States of America. There, in the towns and cities, where religion is regarded as a luxury, Churches and Chapels abound. But, in the rural districts, the population is either utterly destitute of pastoral supervision, or depends, for the sacraments and for spiritual edification, on the visits, few and far between, of some chance missionary. And so it was in the primitive ages before the Church obtained the countenance and support of the civil government; religion flourished in the towns, but in the villages the inhabitants continued to be heathens, and hence an Infidel

* Romans x. 15.

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and a Pagan became convertible terms. In short, where there is no national establishment, they who require instruction least receive it most, and they who require it most have it not at all. And therefore, whether we look at the fact with the eye of the legislator or of the Christian, the circumstance of stationing a man of education, respectability, and religion, in each parish, where the inhabitants are too poor to support, or too ignorant to desire, an instructor, is an advantage to the country, which will only then be properly appreciated when it is lost.

On the other hand, the position of our higher ecclesiastics as the compeers of the royal and great, if it effect not all the good we could desire, certainly gives to English society that moral tone which is the glory of our country. By intercourse with the good, the irreligious learn to respect virtue, and become less immoral than they would otherwise be; for it is impossible to be in the midst of odours without bearing away some portion of their fragrance. Meantime, their children are brought up not only without feelings of hostility to religion, but even with a due regard for its decencies if not for its duties. Thus the way is prepared before the preacher by our national institutions, which bring religion under the notice of many who would not otherwise have bestowed a single thought on the subject. Religion is thrust, as it were, into every one's face; and he must be pertinaciously negligent and wilfully blind who does not examine into its claims.

It is to the circumstance that we have in this

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country an established Church, which, without requiring implicit faith in its dogmas, demands investigation from all its subjects—an establishment which forces men to inquiry, while inquiry leads to conviction—it is to this circumstance that we may attribute the gratifying fact that many and most of those illustrious men, who for intellectual acquirements are the ornaments of their native land, are ever the foremost to bow the knee at the name of Jesus, and to vindicate the ways of God to man. But, whatever may be thought of these considerations—important ones in the estimation of a Christian—the question at the present time and in this country, is not as to the establishing of the Church, but as to the un-establishing of it. And they who have before their eyes either the fear of God or the love of man, will tremble at the responsibility they incur in helping to break up the old paths, lest of those they turn adrift into the highway there should be some—and doubtless there would be many—who, from the tendency of human nature to rush into opposite extremes, would plunge headlong into the abyss of Infidelity and Atheism, and thus involve the nation in all the curses denounced upon an apostate people. To dissolve the religious establishment of this country would be, as it were, to tear the sun from the centre of our social system.

It is, I know, the custom of the adversary to attribute to the existence of an establishment the evils of sectarianism. But to argue thus is to argue from hypothesis and not from fact. For the fact is that, in America, where no establishment is recognized by the

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State, sectarianism rages with a far more bitter spirit than it does in England.* Sectarianism ever has existed, and, till a mighty change come over the spirit of the world, it ever will exist. And therefore, the wise man will not engage in any chimerical project for conciliating all sects; his endeavour will be to moderate the rancour of the sectarian spirit. By an establishment one grand cause of dispute is removed.

* There are some very sensible remarks on this subject—remarks the more valuable from being made by a man of the world—at the conclusion of Mr. Hamilton's interesting volumes on 'Men and Manners in America.' Having stated that in towns there is no apparent deficiency of religion, the author observes,—'In the country, however, this is not the case. These differences of religion rend the country into shreds and patches, varying in everything of colour, form, and texture. In a village, the population of which is barely sufficient to fill one Church and support one Clergyman, the inhabitants are either forced to want religious ministration altogether, or the followers of different sects must agree upon some compromise, by which each yields up some portion of his creed to satisfy the objections of his neighbour. This breeds argument, dispute, and bitterness of feeling. The Socinian will not object to an Arian Clergyman, but declines to have anything to do with a supporter of the Trinity. The Calvinist will consent to tolerate the doctrine of free agency, if combined with that of absolute and co-respective decrees. The Baptist may give up the assertion of some favourite dogmas, but clings to adult baptism as a *sine qua non*. And thus with other sects. But who is to inculcate such a jumble of discrepant and irreconcilable doctrine? No man can shape his doctrine according to the anomalous and piebald creed prescribed by such a congregation, and the practical result is that some one sect becomes victorious for a time; jealousies deepen into antipathies; and what is called an opposition church probably springs up in the village. The rival Clergymen attack each other from the pulpit; newspapers are enlisted on either side, and religious warfare is waged with the bitterness, if not the learning, which has distinguished the controversies of abler polemics.'—'Men and Manners in America,' by Capt. Thomas Hamilton, vol. ii. *ad. fin.* published 1833.

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In every parish the first place is pre-occupied: and this renders one party desirous of peace. It is very seldom that the Clergyman of the parish feels it to be worth his while to enter into controversy with the dissenting teacher. He knows his superiority, and that he has nothing to gain by the contest. Consequently, while local controversies in America are many, and fierce, and prolonged, in England they are few, and soon subside. In an establishment there is less of that kind of zeal which the ignorant admire, but which is, in truth, only party spirit; but there is more of

'Pure religion breathing household laws.'

The very fact of the ministry being provided for, and having no pecuniary interest in making proselytes, tends to peace. One influential party is withdrawn from the scene of combat: and even the dissenting sects enjoy the sunshine which the establishment diffuses, though, like the blind, they distinguish not the light from which it flows. For, having a common interest in preventing the establishment from exceeding the powers to which it is legally entitled, their hostility to one another, which, in the United States, is often disgraceful to the very name of Christianity, is modified. Another advantage of an establishment is that, although it may be impossible to make all men think alike, yet it indirectly leads if not to uniformity yet to similarity of doctrine. The doctrines and practices of the establishment are fixed; and thus it stands a warning against the excesses of rival sects, while it affords a

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model according to which those sects, when correcting their abuses, will to a certain extent shape themselves. Every one must have observed that, in manner, in dress, even in the title he assumes, the dissenting teacher wishes to appear like the Clergyman; and this he would not do unless he were accustomed in weightier matters to look up to the Church with a degree of respect, which he will not perhaps acknowledge even to himself. The consequence of this is, that, although we have sects of every sort and grade in this country, yet the extremes of Unitarianism, and Fanaticism in its wildest state, are far less prevalent here than in the United States. Our sects come much nearer to the golden mean; for the establishment, to which all eyes are turned, is always indirectly infusing some slight portion of caloric into the cold system of the 'Unitarian,' while she tempers the fiery zeal of the Fanatic. The operation, also, of dissenting sects upon the establishment is not without benefit, since it prevents the religious atmosphere from stagnating. Sectarianism is not, therefore, an unmixed evil; or, if it be, I repeat, it is not an evil to be cured by human means. To expect to model an establishment, so as to please all parties, is to indulge in an amiable but chimerical theory. The object of the practical man will be, not to attempt the extirpation of sectarianism, but simply to remedy its evils. He will not seek to add to our numbers by concession of principles; he will not seek to conciliate a few wavering nonconformists by disgusting the conformist; but his object will be to preserve concord within the sanctuary, and by

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exhibiting her services in all the fair beauty of holiness, to make men enamoured of the Church.

To what I have said of the tendency of an establishment to preserve peace among religionists, the acrimonious spirit evinced against the Church at the present time is no contradiction. The violence of the sectarian is to be attributed to very peculiar political circumstances, on which it does not become me to dilate in this place. And what, let me ask, what would be the state of the country, at the present moment, if the combined attack of dissenters and infidels—unhallowed combination!—were met with the spirit in which it is made? What would be the state of the country, if the Clergy of England, instead of acting with the temper of Christians and the deportment of gentlemen, had been habituated to those arts of personal altercation and controversy, which are too often found to prevail where no establishment exists?

It is, indeed, with complacency that I regard the conduct of the vast majority of that sacred order to which I have the happiness to belong, under a system of misrepresentation, calumny, and moral persecution, more hard to bear than tortures or death. And while we look for a recompense elsewhere, through the merits of a crucified Saviour, it is surely a pardonable weakness to feel some satisfaction in the thought that, when, in a future age, the historian is recounting the acts of the present generation, he will tell of a Clergy who, if they were, like the Apostles from whom they claim to descend, misrepresented as the filth of

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the earth and the offscouring of all things, yet so far trod in their Master's footsteps that, being reviled, they learned to bless; being persecuted, they learned to suffer; being defamed, they learned to entreat.

Before I conclude, I must just advert to the system adopted in some of the States of America, where every person is obliged to contribute towards the support of religion, while it is left to his choice to decide upon the sect on which his bounty shall be conferred. And what is the consequence? The prevalence in those States of what is called 'Unitarianism.' He who must support some sect, and yet is indifferent alike to all religion, chooses that form, of course, which is nearest to no religion, and remains for ever ice-bound under that petrifying system of theology—that apology for Christianity—which can teach—what we knew before—that honesty is the best policy, but can never warm the imagination or amend the heart. For advancement, for growth in grace, no opportunity is afforded. If I wish to prove the excellency of the contrary system—if I wish to prove the advantage, not only of a national religious establishment, but of establishing the true Church—it is not to argument that I would resort—I should appeal to the experience of those whom I address. Some there are—the happiest of their kind—who, under any circumstances, would have belonged to the Church of their God. But, of the hundreds—I may say the thousands—who worship in this sanctuary, let me ask what first brought the generality within consecrated walls? They came because, through the influence of an establishment a

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religious atmosphere being created around, it is respectable to attend a place of worship; and because such being the case, and not being controversialists, they preferred to any other the place provided for them by the institutions of their country. Unworthy motives! And yet, my brethren, what has been the consequence? If there had been no establishments, half of those whom I see before me would have remained indifferent to the high privileges and blessings of Christianity; but now—though brought here first, perhaps, from insufficient motives—you have become regular worshippers; gradually, from being mere formalists, you have brought the principles of religion to bear on your general conduct; gradually, from considering prayer to be a disagreeable though a necessary duty, you have learned to feel that communion with the Father of your spirits is a great, a glorious, a holy, a delightful privilege; gradually, you have been led from your kneelings in the pew to the rails of the altar, and there, in the Sacrament of your Saviour's Body and Blood, you have become partakers of the benefits of His passion. To you, then, my beloved brethren, to you I need no longer speak of the advantages of such an establishment as that, which, by the piety of your ancestors, and the wisdom of the Constitution, still consecrates your native land—your hearts have already thanked God for that you were born in a country not only where religion is established, but where the system established is that which was originally instituted by the Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone—that which you can prove to be

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'the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth.'

May we, then, my brethren, be prepared, as patriots, to uphold the establishment of the Church in this country; while, as churchmen, we are resolute to endure all things rather than sacrifice to any notions of expediency her Catholic doctrines, or her essential discipline in the threefold order of the ministry. Let our ark be supported, but—warned by the blood of Uzzah—not by unhallowed means—not by unsanctioned concessions. Better to sacrifice an establishment at once than to compromise the Church. For the Church let us be prepared to suffer anything and everything which the malice of the devil may suggest, or the ingenuity of man invent. At the same time let us bear in mind that he will never die the death of a martyr who does not strive to live the life of a saint, for the patience of the one, and the resolution of the other, proceed from one and the self-same spirit.

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SERMON VII.

'SHE LOVED MUCH.'

St. Luke vii. 47.

I HAVE selected these few short words, in the hope, that being few they will sink the more deeply into our hearts, and afford a fit subject for meditation even to those who shall be unable to attend throughout to the discourse which I am about to deliver on the present most happy occasion. May God the Holy Spirit be with us, and may He grant that, even if in our opinions, in these distracted times, we may be, some of us, found to differ, we may at least have that mark of true Christianity in our souls, that 'we love much.'

You will recollect that the words themselves belong to a very affecting anecdote related in the Gospel according to St. Luke.

Our Blessed Lord was either in Capernaum or Nain, and was there invited to eat with Simon a Pharisee. 'And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.'

[Preached at the consecration of Leven Church, July 28, 1845.]

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By the translators of what is called the authorized version of the Bible it is asserted, as you will find in the summary of this chapter, that this woman was Mary Magdalene. This appears to have been a notion of some commentators later than the time of the Fathers; as is also another supposition, that she was the same with Mary the sister of Lazarus. St. Augustine was plainly of a different opinion; and the characters of the three persons seem distinct from each other.

But I pass by these things, as it is not my intention to involve you in a critical discussion. It is sufficient for my present object to state what is indisputable, that she had been a sinner, that she was a penitent, and that she had ere this been an object of the Divine mercy and commiseration of our Lord. The latter point is clear, because the motive assigned for her conduct is, that she loved much, and the cause of her much love was her knowledge that much had been forgiven her.

We have seen what the conduct was of this poor penitent because she loved much. How different was the conduct of Simon the Pharisee. Simon perceived that the Lord Jesus was a prophet mighty in word and in deed; he might have said to our Lord, with Nicodemus, 'Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him.' And believing this, desirous also of obtaining a prophet's reward, he determined to provide our Lord, on this occasion, with the necessaries of life. It was a good action; and our Lord's acceptance of Simon's hospi-

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tality shows that Simon was not a bad man. Indeed when we remember that he acted counter to the feelings of the Pharisaic party, forming, as that party did, what we should now call the Religious world of the Jews, much praise is due to Simon for doing what he did. But there was absent the one great principle; he was not influenced by love; he could manfully overcome the prejudices of his sect; he could act justly, and not do as the other Pharisees did, when, seeing the miracles of our Lord, they ascribed them to Beelzebub: but he loved little. While he relieved our Lord, he acted in a spirit of proud condescension. If he had loved our Lord, surely he would, on the occasion of His visit, have done everything that in him lay to make that love manifest: but now half ashamed of what he did,—not prepared to reject, and yet unwilling to receive, as the Messiah, the lowly Man of Sorrows who entered his abode, he did what was necessary, and nothing more. He condescended, and was proud of his condescension, in spite of the malignant remarks to which he would expose himself, to entertain One who was going about doing good,—but he omitted every customary mark of respect which he would have carefully extended to his superior or equal in worldly circumstances. Our Lord marked the neglect; those who loved Him marked the neglect. 'Simon,' said our Lord, 'I entered thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; thou gavest me no kiss: mine head with oil thou didst not anoint.'

How like was the conduct of this proud Pharisee to that of many persons of the present day. How similar

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his treatment of our Lord and God Incarnate, to their treatment of our Lord's Representative and Spouse upon earth,—His Holy Church. There are proud men upon earth, who, like Simon, not void of religion, feeling on the contrary a strong interest in religion from the good it is calculated to effect, think it nevertheless a kind of condescension, on their part, to patronize the Church;—a condescension, forsooth, to patronize their own Mother and their Master's Spouse; who, instead of acting as dutiful children, think it a merit to be what they call Friends of the Church, to conciliate whose friendship the Church ought to make great sacrifices: and it is with them as it was with Simon; thinking much of their condescension, and of their patronage of the Church, they regard everything as superfluous, except what is absolutely necessary for the mere inculcation of the moral precepts of Religion, or the more prominent doctrines of the Gospel: hundreds of pounds will they expend upon the entertainment of a superior or an equal in this world; then only does economy suggest itself when the service or the shrine of God is concerned. Living themselves in princely splendour, they would abscind all magnificence from the worship of Christ our God; asserting that extreme simplicity of worship is becoming the homage we render to our God, because when He was on earth, He was a lowly wanderer and had not where to lay His precious head; forgetting that although the God-man was once in a Body of humiliation, He is now in His glorified Body at the right hand of Power, King of kings, and Lord of lords: forgetting

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also that if magnificence be eschewed in what pertains to His sanctuary and worship, magnificence must also be avoided in the dwellings and in the doings of His followers; for the disciple is not above his Master, and we may not treat the Master with less respect than the servant. If churches are not to be magnificent, then our bishops must not live in palaces: if the service of the sanctuary is to be of the simplest character, then let our Christian nobles and merchants dismiss their retinue of servants, and serve tables themselves: men should be at least consistent; proud prelates and luxurious princes must sell all they have and give unto the poor, before they preach against decorum in the worship of their God: but while they live in their ceiled houses, the few who love the Lord Jesus will not suffer the ark of their Lord to remain behind curtains.

Assuredly Simon's conduct admitted of palliation: his friends and flatterers might have pointed out hundreds of poor objects around him in abject poverty, and until these were relieved, his economy, according to their reasoning, would be worthy of praise: besides, what had a prophet to do with the elegancies of life? such things he ought to have despised. Simon had made provision for all essential things: was water absolutely necessary? Was our Lord injured by not receiving a kiss? A kiss might have been given by a hypocrite or traitor; He was betrayed by a kiss. Was it absolutely necessary to anoint the head? How much more profitably the money might have been expended.

Who can gainsay the soundness of all these reasons?

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The only answer to them is to be found in asking another question,—suppose Herod the king had been Simon's guest, would these reasons have then occurred? Would there then have been no kiss, no water, no ointment? Our Lord and Saviour needs nothing at our hands: 'every beast of the forest is His, His are the cattle upon a thousand hills.'* Whatever He accepts at our hands is condescension on His part; is an honour to us: to honour us, indeed, He so far sets limits to His own Omnipotence, and permits us to serve Him. But if these things be so, He requires of us our very best. When our Lord entered a poor man's house He did not then demand those elegancies of life, which He expected the rich man to provide; by withholding which the rich man in fact insulted Him, and drew down the gentle but severe rebuke which is implied in the passage before us.

Many men, when they see an action done which tacitly rebukes themselves, instead of seeking to amend their own conduct, discover or invent some charge against him whose conduct in that particular they will not imitate, and yet cannot condemn. So was it with Simon. The poor woman's conduct was a reproof to him. She was indignant when she saw that the customary marks of respect were withheld from the object of her adoration: she must have known, that, in acting as she did, she would expose herself to censure, and all her past sins be brought to notice, but she cared for nothing: she would not see her Benefactor insulted: everything was sacrificed to the generous impulse; for

* Ps. l. 10.

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Him she was prepared to suffer reproach and to submit to insult. And where, my brethren, is the true Christian who will not sympathize with her? Where is the true Christian who does not rejoice to be reproached, to suffer contempt and scorn from men, when labouring in his Master's cause and service? She was indeed thought scorn of by Simon,—and though Simon only spake within himself, yet the Searcher of Hearts was at his side, and his attention was called from the sins of the woman to his own sin: our Lord pointed out to him the real cause of that neglect which he had evinced towards Him, even the fact that he loved little. 'Simon,' said our Lord, 'I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors, the one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both; tell me therefore which of them will love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most; and He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.'

How affecting are our Lord's words as He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this woman? I entered thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head; thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment; wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for

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she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'

She loved much; and the cause of her love to our Lord must have been, as I have said before, the mercy she had experienced from Him, when those around, like Simon, in the present instance, had been severe in their judgments, and harsh in their conduct. She had been healed of her infirmities, and, if she were Mary Magdalene, seven devils had been cast out of her. She saw the Lord in the flesh; she believed that Man of Sorrows to be, in very deed, the Messiah; she knew Him to be the greatest Benefactor her poor sinful soul ever had; and she loved Him much. She saw Him despised when not openly rejected, and she loved Him more; she reflected with horror on her past sins, and this only increased her adoring love towards Him who pardoned and pitied her, and empowered her to pursue the path of godliness for the time to come. She loved much. Now, my brethren, as to ourselves, we indeed cannot have more cause for love to our Redeemer than this poor loving penitent; for we have all of us the same cause, being all poor sinful, perishing creatures, meriting damnation, and rescued solely as from the penalty, so also from the dominion of sin, by His mediation. But she knew not at this time what is known to us all, what our Divine Saviour had to endure in order that His mediation might be efficacious; she knew not, as we do, the wondrous scheme of Redeeming Love: with the nature of those benefits which He hath procured for us we are better acquainted; and we, too, know the price which, in obtaining these good

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gifts, the Holy Jesus had to pay. And, my brethren, ought we not to love as she did? Ought we not to love Him as much? Ought we not to love Him more?

This is a question often asked by those who are in earnest; and how frequently their consciences give an unfavourable reply, we, the ministers of the Gospel, are witnesses; for on no one subject are people more inclined to open their grief to us than on this, that they do not experience all that love, that devoted enthusiastic love to Jesus which their hearts tell them to be due to a God who hath endured so much for us.

Now the love of God is a gift and grace that cometh from God; it must be asked for in prayer, and must be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. But God the Holy Ghost requires us, while we attribute all grace to Him, to have recourse at all times to the means appointed for obtaining the particular grace that we desire. And it is often from our not resorting to the means appointed for obtaining this blessing, that we fail to secure it. Have we had recourse to these means? Let us see.

'Thou hast judged rightly,' said our Lord, when Simon answered that he to whom most has been forgiven will love most: but, in order to guard against that miserable and diabolical conclusion, 'The greater the sinner the greater the saint,' we must here remark that the allusion is to one who not only has been forgiven, but knows that he has been forgiven. A man may have had much forgiven and not know it; does the man of necessity love much? Let us take an example. Let us suppose an officer sent to arrest us

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for a debt which we had entirely forgotten, or of which we knew not the existence, a debt, we will say, occasioned by our having become incautiously security for another; a friend meeting the officer on his way, and being unwilling to have us disturbed for a debt so contracted, discharges the account, and we remain unmolested, but entirely ignorant of the obligation we have thus incurred: is there at that time any accession of our love towards our generous friend? No,—but when we are looking carefully into our affairs, and perceive that we have incurred this liability, and then enquire into the reason why the payment of the debt had not been demanded, and upon this are told of the kind intervention of our unknown friend,—then how is our love towards him increased? then how deep is our gratitude for his unmerited kindness? You see, then, my brethren, the necessity of strict self-examination as one of the means to be regularly adopted, if we would love much. When we consider that each sin is in its own nature damnable, (however trivial the world may deem it,) and examine our conduct, we shall soon see how much there is for which we need forgiveness: we may know of sins committed by others greater in magnitude than any of which we are guilty ourselves, —but when we come to the number of our sins, we must each account ourselves the chief of sinners: as to the number of our sins,—each deadly, except for the Advocate we have with the Father,—we have more to state against ourselves than against any one else; we feel that we are the chief of sinners: we feel that we have cause to love much.

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Such is the course of those who are in a state of sanctification, always rejoicing, always loving, always sorrowful and increasing in penitential fervour. The careless man, and it is the careless man whom Simon represents, loves little. Why? because perfectly contented with himself he knows not what sin is: he knows not how much he needs forgiveness; without examining his conduct minutely, he is satisfied with his general integrity, with being better than ordinary men in his station in life, and applauded by the world, he loveth little, if he loveth at all. A true Christian on the contrary, by constant recourse to minute self-examination, by scrutinizing every thought, word, act, and motive, is continually ascertaining the amount of that debt for which he needs forgiveness, and for which his pardon has been obtained. On this account it is that saints are always the deepest penitents; this it is which accounts for that, which to the worldly and the careless is perplexing, the deep penitential sorrows of saints: they may have committed no great and heinous offences; they may have continued from the day when they were first brought to the font under grace; but they are thoroughly acquainted with the nature of sin, the slightest infraction of the Divine Law by the creature; they know the deadly nature of all sin; of our very infirmities, the slightest sin of thought, however speedily checked: they know that for every sin of theirs, however slight in the world's estimation, their God shed His blood: over their negligences and ignorances therefore, they continually weep, not because they are to them any longer destructive, but because,

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though blotted out, they added to the sorrows of Gethsemane, and to the sufferings of Calvary: they are ever finding fresh cause for love, by detecting in themselves, through self-examination, stains of sin of which they were once even ignorant, but which were only wiped away by the Blood of the Lamb.

Yes, my brethren, the saint is ever penitent and loving, because, though he may not have committed great sins, he knows that, insignificant as each grain of sand is in itself, the ship may be sunk by a weight of sand not less than by a weight of lead.

You perceive, then, that the first thing to be done, if we would encourage in our hearts the principle of love, is to be very diligent in self-examination. But it may be said that the result of self-examination is often hatred of self, not love to Christ. And it may be so, for to self-examination a habit of meditation must be added. We are to examine ourselves as to our conduct and our motives, but we must also look out of ourselves. By scrutinizing their feelings, and deploring the insensibility of their hearts, men only bring themselves into a morbid state, injurious to themselves, and unprofitable to all around them. What is the course which you would ordinarily pursue, if any time you are not moved by the facts of Redemption as you ought to be? What is the course pursued in the ordinary concerns of life? A dear friend is taken dangerously ill,—how is it that you act in this case? Do you go straightway to your closet, and there examine the state of your feelings, whether you feel precisely the degree of grief which you think to befit the occasion? Do you bewail your

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insensibility? No, what you do is to hasten to the sick bed of the sufferer; you see him writhing with pain; you hear him expressing his gratitude to those around him and his trust in God: you behold his kind look directed to yourself, and expressive of more than words could utter,—and to your feelings you give way in that manner and to that degree which is natural to you. Or if you are unable to attend the sick bed; your imagination immediately presents to your mind all the facts of the case, all the past acts of kindness evinced towards you by your friend; and his present sufferings, into which you can the more deply enter, because, from your knowledge of his character, you are quite certain how he will feel,—how even to you, in the midst of his pain, his thoughts will advert; and you weep, not because you ought, but because you must, because you cannot help it. But still further. You are sorry for the sufferings of an acquaintance whom you respect; but this is very different from the feelings elicited when we know of the sorrows of one who has opened to us his grief, and who is the object of our love. The woman under consideration did not stand apart to examine her neart, and to ascertain whether her love for her Divine Benefactor was sufficiently fervent: she thought not of herself, but of Him; she knew that though she loved much she ought still to love more, and she followed Him and watched Him, and heard Him speak as never man spake, and beheld all the wondrous works of mercy which He wrought; and by so doing her love increased, and she sought every little occasion to evince her love, not from a sense of duty, but because, when

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we really love, our greatest pleasure is to do what we think will be well pleasing to the object of our devotion and gratitude.

Thus you see what steps we must take, if we would cultivate the feeling of love to God, and those other feelings which are akin to it. We must realize to the mind the awful facts in which we are so nearly, so deeply, nay, eternally concerned; and how? How but by meditation? It is by solemn and prayerful meditation on the facts of the Gospel, and upon all that relates to our Incarnate God, so as to realize to our minds all that He once endured, or is now accomplishing for us, that we are to kindle our affections and inflame our love; and it is to a neglect of this duty of meditation, that, (if we do not love the Saviour,) our want of love is to be traced. The Gospels are read by the careless, merely as they read a history of great events: they see not with the mind's eye the very things that were done, the blood drops at Gethsemane, the tortures of Golgotha. It is by meditation that we bring these facts vividly before our souls, that we place ourselves by our sorrowing Saviour's side, or with St. John we recline on His bosom, or like Mary, sit at His feet; it is through meditation that the Holy Spirit writes these realities upon the tablets of our hearts, and it is through meditation that the true Christian, knowing more and more of his Saviour's sufferings, is taught more and more to love Him.

For this very purpose it is, that the facts relating to the sufferings of the Blessed Jesus, our only Lord and Saviour, are by the Holy Spirit so minutely described;

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for this very purpose that the Man of Sorrows, when most acquainted with grief is exposed, as it were, to the gaze of His brethren: for this very purpose that we are permitted to see Him sorrowful and very heavy, seeking the sympathy of His disciples, but finding none; (their eyes being oppressed with sleep, as if to teach us that the last poor comfort which human nature seeks in its sufferings, the sympathy of friends, was, of purpose withheld from Him whose agony was so intense that He sweat as it were great drops of blood;) yes, 'being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.' *

My brethren,—it is that we may meditate upon the facts, until we realize them to the mind, that we are told of His head crowned with thorns, and of His ears being pierced with revilings, and of His back furrowed with the scourge, and of His face defiled with spitting, and of His neck burdened with the cross, and of His hands and feet pierced with nails, and of His being crucified between malefactors, and of His loud cry, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani.

Can you meditate on these things until you have actually realized them without having your feelings moved? The poor woman in our text was moved with pity when she saw our God going about a homeless wanderer, rejected and despised,—and shall not we be moved, when we know these additional facts, at that time unknown to her.

But we can pity a suffering stranger; pity only be-

* St. Luke xxii. 44.

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comes love when we are ourselves connected with the suffering person: and therefore meditation must not stop here. We must look upon the sufferer with the mind's eye, until tears flow down our cheeks; but we must not take off our eyes until we see in Him, our God: the sufferer is indeed perfect Man, but in that one Divine Person there are two Natures, and He is also perfect God: the natures are two, but the Person is one, and the suffering Person is none other but one God. 'He is our God, even the God of whom cometh Salvation. God is the Lord, by whom we escape death.'* When suffering as man, He did not cease to be God; when acting as God, He did not cease to be man; the two natures were in Him inseparably united, and are so still; 'although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.' Mark, then, my brethren, what must have been the cause, at least, a principal cause of that bloody agony, that mental suffering so indescribably great; He who suffered, being God as well as Man, to Him all things must at all times be present:—past, present, and future are to God, all apparent at once: in Him is no succession of ideas; He is an Eternal Now, an Everlasting I AM. He seeth as distinctly the things that are not, as the things that are; 'He calleth the things which be not, as though they were.' †

It is then no figure of speech, when the Christian, thinking of the Divine sufferer, saith, 'My sins were the burden of His soul in the garden; my sins were the heavy scourge upon His back, and the crown of thorns upon His head; my sins were the spikes which affixed

* Psalm lxviii. 20. † Romans iv. 17.

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Him to the cross, and the spear which pierced Him to the heart:' it is no figure of speech, when the Christian, looking upon the agonized body of His God, exclaims, I did it. No. For the human nature of the God-man was agonized, because to Him was known, through His Divine Omniscience, every sin of every man to be born into the world, for which He was then paying the penalty. My penitent brother, mark this; that sin, that dreadful sin, to which thy upbraiding conscience is even now adverting, that sin was present to thy Saviour's mind in His agony; He in the garden saw thee in that hour of darkness, when thou didst think no eye was on thee; He knew that evil thought when thou didst desire the evil which thou didst fear to accomplish: thou hast repented; thou hast turned to the Lord—it is well: thou hast been converted,—it is well: thou hast heard Him say, Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven; it is well: so said our Lord of the poor woman in our text; to her He said, 'Thy sins are forgiven:' and, 'she loved much.' Yes, she knew not all it cost to obtain the forgiveness thus announced, but she loved much. We do know what tears of blood were shed for each offence of ours; we know of Calvary,—the cross,—the passion,—and shall we love little?

Well indeed would it be, if, following the suggestion of the Church, we would devote one day in each week, even that day, Friday, on which the great atoning sacrifice was offered, to special meditation on that awful event, when God shed His blood for us, and so prevented our own death from becoming of necessity

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the gate to everlasting misery. Every day should this awful fact occupy our thoughts; but as one day in each year, so one day in each week, and one hour in each day, should be devoted to exclusive thought on this fact; for what is not done systematically will always be done imperfectly.

And now let us proceed to ask,—when, through the blessing of the Holy Ghost upon our self-examination and meditation, our hearts are glowing with love to God, how is that love to be evinced? And to answer this question, let us be permitted to ask another: How is it that we evince our love to a superior in this world? Undoubtedly our superior will withdraw from us his love and his confidence, if we do not with zeal and diligence discharge the duties which devolve upon us in any office to which he may have appointed us; nor will he, under such circumstances, condescend to receive any favour at our hands: but it is also undoubtedly true that a man may discharge diligently the duties of an office, may conduct himself properly towards a superior in office, not from love or respect to that superior, but from various other, and some of them merely selfish, motives. Although, therefore, a superior will not believe that an inferior whom he has benefited really loves him, unless he discharges properly the duties devolving upon him, he cannot conclude, from the mere performance of prescribed duties, that the actuating motive is love and gratitude; but he does argue the existence of love and gratitude when he sees the inferior, without neglecting his greater duties, looking out for every opportunity to do what will

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please him in various little unimportant particulars; particulars too unimportant to be made a subject of command; nor will he reject the little presents which the inferior may sometimes offer to him, not in the presumption that he can benefit his benefactor, but from the earnest wish of showing that benefactor that he is not unmindful of his favours, that inexpressible desire of manifesting gratitude which a grateful heart experiences. The love of a dutiful inferior is always shown by little attentions. And this feeling our greatest Benefactor, our Lord, our Saviour, and our God, would have us cherish in our hearts,—He commands us, as our Lord and Master, as to the weightier things of the Law; but while He would dismiss us from His service, if we were to leave these things undone,—He accepts at our hands the tithe we offer of the mint and cummin.

The sum of Christian life is made up of little duties, as well as of the mortification of little sins: he is not a true Christian who despises little things, the minor duties. It is but once in a lifetime, if so much, that we can save the life of a friend by the sacrifice of our own, but every day we may make a dear friend happy by little, scarcely observable attentions: it is only the rich man who can build a Church at his own expense, but the very pauper may contribute to its decoration, if not coldly repulsed by the supercilious. The Church, when wisely administered, will provide for opportunities in which the loving heart of the poor man, as well as of the rich, may exercise itself in little acts of

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devotion and love: and most unwise is the administration of the Church, when these indications of the natural impulses of our nature are coldly repulsed: when proud men in high places bid the loving heart, which delights in little acts, even in points of ceremony, to give vent to its feelings,—to betake itself to the methodist or the papist, as being too enthusiastic or too superstitious for the dignity of an establishment, which is a blessing, and only so far a blessing, as it meets the spiritual exigencies of the children of God.

Be sure of this,—the same feelings which actuated the poor penitent before us, are to actuate us all, till the end of time. Christianity is not a cold system of morals; it is not a stiff form of doctrine; it is not a mere confession of faith or protest against error; true Christianity consists in devotion to a Person; a desire to do everything our hand findeth to do, whether it be great or whether it be small, which we think will be well-pleasing to that one Person whom we adore: an endeavour to do all that in us lies to promote the glory and further the cause among men of that adored Person, though He is too exalted to be benefited by our puny efforts; that adored and worshipped Person being Jesus Christ, the God-man, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Do you look to the Church, (considered as the mystical body of which Christ is the head, the aggregate of all believers incorporated by Baptism into one society, and grafted into Christ,) do you seek to benefit it, do you seek to

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promote its interests, not from sectarian feeling, not with feelings of the politician, God forbid, who regards it only as a spiritual police, but because it is the Spouse of Christ, the Saviour you adore? Or do you regard the material fabric of the Church as a house of prayer? you see in it more than a mere house of prayer (though this it is), you reverence it as the palace of your heavenly and adorable King, and you observe with pleasure the decent ceremonials which the officers of the celestial palace have appointed, and seek, by the decencies of the sanctuary, to evince your love to Him who is the Lord of the sanctuary, and whose feet, were He on earth, you would rejoice to wash. Or do you look to the poor? when you relieve the poor, while the eye of the flesh looks upon the suffering pauper, the eye of faith sees him to be the representative of Him who for our sakes became poor indeed, and the ear of faith hears with joy the assertion, what thou doest unto these thou doest unto Me. You go to the Holy Eucharist—do you go to obtain grace? Oh, cold expression! you do indeed go to receive grace, but you go for the special purpose of meeting that sacred Person whom you adore, where He is specially, though mysteriously, present; you go by faith to become more nearly united with Him,—you go, that by His Spirit, the Person you worship, serve, love with love indescribable, may impart Himself to your soul, and you dwell in Him, and He in you.

Yes, our Lord permits our personal love to Him thus to enter into every religious act, and whether we eat or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do, if we

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really love Him we have an opportunity of evincing our love. Then shall ye know that ye are Christ's disciples indeed and in truth, when ye love much: and oh! how joyful will be the sound, at the last day, when we hear the Saviour, as He places us on the right hand, say, 'Their sins which are many are forgiven, for they loved much.'

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SERMON VIII.*

'THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT.'

St. Matt. ix. 20.

THE fact to which our text refers may be narrated best by comparing the statements of St. Mark and St. Luke, with the more concise narrative of St. Matthew. A certain woman which was diseased, having had an issue of blood for twelve years, when she heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself, 'if I can but touch the hem of His garment I shall be whole;' and immediately the issue of her blood was staunched; and Jesus knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And when all denied, Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of Me? and He looked round about upon her who had done this thing, and when she stood trembling before Him, He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole.

There seems to have been at all times a mysterious connection between faith on the part of an applicant for mercy, and the bestowal of a blessing by our Lord.

* [Preached at the re-opening of Trinity Church, Hull, December 10, 1845.]

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In this very chapter we find that, before the miracle was wrought upon the daughter of Jairus, our Blessed Lord enquired, 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' To the woman of Canaan He said, 'O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' When He cured the paralytic, He did so, 'seeing the faith of those who let him down through the roof.' Nay further, we are told that, because of their unbelief, in His own country He did not many mighty works; or stronger still, He could do there no mighty works, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk and healed them. In that the Lord Jesus is God, very God of very God, to Him all things were then, as they are now, possible, but in that He was not God only, but man also, even the God-man; to Him as Christ, things were only possible according to that scheme of mercy devised and ordained by the three Blessed Persons of the Holy Trinity; and, as the God-man, He could only act when there existed faith on the part of those who appealed to His mercy. And it was so with respect also to the miracles wrought by the hands of the Apostles; before the miracle could be effected, faith in the Lord Jesus was required: the cripple at Lystra was not cured by St. Paul, until the Apostle perceived that he had faith to be healed; and when the lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple was made strong, it was through faith in the name of Jesus.

We do not pretend to account for this; we merely mention it as an indisputable fact. The fact has been made known to us by God: what He reveals, we receive, and, without questioning, act upon it. And as

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it was with respect to these visible miracles wrought by our Lord upon the bodies of men,—so is it with respect to those miracles which He still works, through His Spirit, upon our souls, when He regenerates them, and sanctifies them, and turns the sinner's heart of stone into a heart of flesh: without faith we can obtain no spiritual gift; we are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ; we are kept by the power of God through faith; it is by faith we are justified, by faith we are saved.

But here comes the question, What kind of Faith is this which is thus so needful? And in order to answer this we must bear in mind, that though in one sense it is true that Faith will save us, yet it can only save us by bringing us to Christ, since the Lord Jesus Christ, and He only, is the Saviour of men. We may not rest upon our Faith, then, any more than upon our Works: though Faith be that qualification within us which is necessary to render us susceptible of grace, we may not say, I believe that I am saved, and therefore I am saved: Did the poor woman, in our text, content herself with saying, I believe that Jesus can cure me, and therefore I am cured; I believe that He will make me whole, and therefore I am made whole? No, if such had been her Faith, her Faith would never have saved her. Her Faith saved her, because it impelled her to seek the only Saviour: her Faith saved her, because it induced her to overcome all obstacles in order to touch Him from whom only, and not from her Faith, the virtue went out which effected her cure: she believed that the Lord Jesus had power to heal

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her; but healed she was not, until she touched the hem of His garment.

How astonished must the infidel be when he peruses this narrative. When the poor woman heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind and touched the hem of His garment, and, saith the Holy Ghost, immediately, that is, on touching the hem of His garment, not before, though her Faith preceded her action,—on touching the hem of His garment, immediately the issue of blood was staunched. The infidel will, of course, apply here the arguments he makes use of to disparage the doctrine of the Sacraments as held in the Christian Church. 'What superstition!' he will say—'can it really be believed that the act of touching the hem of a garment, the act of bringing herself into contact with a little woollen cloth, could effect a cure upon this poor woman? She ought to have been repulsed at once!' But, my brethren, by Christ our God, the poor woman remained unrebuked. Though she had Faith before she touched the hem of the garment, it was not till she came in contact with it that her cure was effected. She touched the hem of the garment, and then straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up: she touched the hem of His garment, and then,—to add to the mystery, Jesus immediately, the very moment that she touched Him, knew in Himself that virtue, a Divine gift, had gone out of Him, the God-man: she touched the hem of His garment, and when the poor faithful penitent stood trembling before Him, the voice of her God Incarnate was heard, instead of upbraiding her for superstition, speaking to her in words

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of kindness, and saying, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith, even that faith which prompted thee to touch the hem of My garment, hath made thee whole.

Now here you perceive that two things went together, an inward act of Faith and recourse to something external, both the internal and the external bearing upon Christ,—she touched the hem of His garment: our Lord in all His miracles required a susceptibility on the part of the applicant for His mercy, and an outward action as regarded Himself: He required faith on the part of the person seeking His aid, and then He touched that person, or spake certain words to him, or anointed his eyes with clay, or bid him have recourse to some action insignificant in itself, or, as in the case before us, He still more strongly enforced the connection between the faith within and the external act, by His condescending kindness to her who had touched the hem of His garment. The two acts were combined, the inward and the outward; not one without the other, but both together. And so, (according to a usual mode of speech when two causes conspire to produce one effect,) we find the Holy Ghost ascribing the poor woman's cure to the fact that she touched our Lord; 'Straightway,' that is, on her touching the hem of His garment, 'the fountain of her blood dried up;' while on the other hand our Blessed Lord cheered her heart by declaring, 'Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole!'

And so was it in things spiritual: when St. Peter addressed certain persons who were already believers

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what did he say? Your belief is sufficient? It is superstitious to suppose that any efficacy is attached to a mere form or ceremony?—to believe that any inward and spiritual grace can be conveyed by an outward and visible sign? No, his exhortation to those believers was, Repent and be baptized: let your faith bring you to Christ: but Christ is no longer visible, how are you then to approach Him? He has appointed the means in the Sacrament of Baptism: here is the hem of His garment, touch it and be healed, all ye who have upon you the deadly disease of sin. They believed, they were baptized, they touched the hem of their Saviour's garment, and they were healed. When St. Paul had told the jailor of Philippi that to be saved he must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he did not consider his belief sufficient, but the jailor was baptized, he and all his, straightway: he believed, and, like the poor woman before us, touched the hem of his Saviour's garment. And when our Blessed Lord, as we read in the sixth chapter of St. John, had declared Himself to be 'the Bread which cometh down from Heaven,' the spiritual sustenance of the soul, when He declared, 'Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you;' 'He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him;' He did not rest there, but soon after appointed the outward means through which the Blessing might be applied to each penitent and faithful soul, the Blessing of a spiritual union with the God-man, the only Mediator, and through Him, God as well as man, with God

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Himself, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 'The cup of Blessing which we bless,' saith the Holy Ghost, speaking through St. Paul, in the tenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, 'is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ, the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?' These are the outward means, not distinct from, but in conjunction with, faith, by which those who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, even Christ Himself, who 'is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption,' may have their souls satisfied. These are still the two things required, ere the Gift be conferred, and the Grace wrought upon the soul; subjectively, the Faith which exists in a penitent's heart; objectively, the outward sign of the Sacrament; the inward susceptibility of the soul, and the hem of the garment through which the virtue passes from Him, who alone hath power to save and to edify.

Thus hath our Lord applied to things spiritual, for our spiritual consolation and assurance, a principle upon which men act in the affairs of this world. A man who has served his country, and is assured of the good will of his Sovereign towards him, although he may be aware that it is the Sovereign's intention to confer upon him a pension or a peerage, is neither a pensioner nor a peer, until the little ceremony has been gone through of attaching to the patent the few little letters which comprise the Sovereign's name: then, but not till then, he is gifted with that for which he was only qualified before; a man who has purchased an estate, and even paid the money, is not in possession of the estate until

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the little ceremony is performed of consigning to him certain pieces of parchment styled the title-deeds.

Ill, then, does it become those to scoff who, in their transactions with one another, thus know the value of forms and signs, when signs and forms are appointed under the Gospel as pledges to assure men whose souls are already prepared by faith, that the spiritual Gift they desire, and which has been promised to them, is actually consigned to them by Him who is the Giver of all good Things. The Sacraments of the Gospel and the ordinances of the Church are thus ordained as means of extending to the Penitent and Faithful, when seeking Pardon or Grace, the hem of the Saviour's garment.

It is not superstition, then, for faithful men thus to use and to rely upon the ordinances of the Christian religion: there is no superstition in having recourse to actions between which and their results there is no discernible connection, if those actions be either enjoined or sanctioned by God. For a man, without any promise from God, through His prophet, to have washed in the Jordan seven times, expecting to be cured of his leprosy, would have been superstition. Considered in themselves, the waters of Abana and Pharpar were better than, or certainly as good, as all the waters of Israel: but it ceased to be superstitious, it became a religious act, when, relying on the Divine promise, Naaman the Syrian had recourse to the action prescribed to him: his leprosy left him. The waters of Jordan were to the Syrian leper, as to the poor woman before us the hem of her Saviour's garment. It would not be superstition for a man sick of the palsy to make a

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pilgrimage to the Holy Land in expectation of a cure, if the Lord God had commanded him to do so, and had promised his restoration to health as the reward of his obedience; but to do such a thing, or any similar thing, without a promise, this would be superstitious. So you will observe the superstitious property in an act consists not in having recourse to means apparently inefficacious, but in having recourse to them without a sufficient warrant from reason or from Revelation. It is through things external that many of the gifts and graces which we expect to realize in the Christian Church are to pass from Christ, from whom alone the virtue emanates, to our souls. And the only question is, what are the external things to which we are to resort? It is not a question whether faithful men touching the hem of their Saviour's garment will receive a Blessing, but how shall we in these days know for certain what the hem of the garment is.

A heathen man being converted, comes to Holy Baptism. Is that superstition? The infidel asks, What can the affusion of a little water with a certain form of words avail? The convert answers, I am a sinful man, and to be cured of the leprosy of sin, I touch the hem of my Saviour's garment. Or, being Christians yourselves, you exercise your Christian privilege and bring your little one to be baptized. You do so, because you believe in the doctrine of original sin, and because the Scripture teaches that they who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ,—you do so, because our merciful Saviour most lovingly inviteth us to bring our little ones to Him, saying, Suffer little children to come

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unto Me, and forbid them not; and there are no other means, except Holy Baptism, through which they can be brought unto Him; you do so, because you perceive how the faith of Jairus was accepted and brought Christ to his child; you do so, because you remember that when the sick of the palsy lay helpless as a little child, he was brought to Jesus by the faith of his friends, and Jesus seeing their Faith blessed him: your Faith, or the Faith of our common mother the Church, brings your little children to Christ; we cause them to touch the hem of our Saviour's garment, and he who was born a child of wrath, becomes, as the Catechism teaches us, a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.

But though the poor woman before us was healed of her disorder, it did not follow, if she neglected the care of her health, that she would not fall into other and worse and more fatal diseases; it did not follow that because Jairus's daughter was raised from the dead, she should not die again. From grace given we may fall, and fall finally, and grace may be bestowed and yet not used. Although that, by bringing our child to Christ, we rescue him from the curse of that original sin under which he was born, he may fall into other sins which may in their nature be equally deadly, and which will plunge him into everlasting ruin, unless he repent betimes. And when he does repent, when he does sorrow for past sin with all his heart and soul, yet how does he know that his sins are pardoned? what pledge has he to assure him thereof? I speak to real penitents, and they know how agonising to the

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soul that doubt is; but do you truly repent and unfeignedly believe the Holy Gospel? then each day of your life you may attend at church, and hear one who hath power and commandment given unto him by God to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, and therefore unto you, the absolution and remission of your sins; you may hear him declare in God's name that by God you are pardoned and absolved. Oh! the blessing to faithful and penitent hearts, day by day to have this assurance given unto them, as advancing day by day in love to their Saviour and their God, their abhorrence of sin, and consequently their repentance becomes more acute. With still stronger sensations of gratitude do they receive similar words of comfort when they draw near to their Lord in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; for the words of the absolution there, are to them as the words of our Lord to the woman before us, when she touched the hem of His garment, 'Be of good comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole.'

It is on this principle that you bring young persons to the Bishop to be confirmed, that is, to receive strengthening grace at the period of life when they are most exposed to the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil: and you come here yourselves, they and you together, to worship God the Blessed Trinity under an appointed form; and when you take one another for better and for worse in holy matrimony, you come here expecting to obtain a blessing upon your union; and when you are sick you ask for the prayers of the Church, confiding on their efficacy; in short, to all the

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various offices and ordinances of the Church you have recourse, as from time to time you need them, under the various and varying circumstances of life. And is this superstition? No, because Christ, the head of the Church, though appointing only two sacraments as generally necessary for salvation, has nevertheless left power in His Church to appoint various ordinances as means of grace, and to repeal them, if their abolition be expedient. He said to His Apostles, and by implication to their successors, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,—ye, the constituted authorities of the kingdom of God upon earth. The Holy Ghost still abideth in the Church as the Comforter, and we expect Him to act through those ordinances which He inspires the ecclesiastical authorities to appoint. The ordinances thus duly ordained become to us the hem of the Saviour's garment, as from time to time we seek Him to realize the blessings which from time to time we require.

Before the blessed Reformation of our own Church, there existed ordinances in the Church of England similar to many still retained in foreign churches, which at the Reformation were abolished by those who had authority in the Church to do so, the Clergy in Convocation acting with the laity in Parliament, and under the sanction of the Sovereign. Such for example as using holy water upon entering a church, and a vast variety of observances which had degenerated into mere forms, and were to the soul as rivers which overflow without fertilizing the soil. Now it would be superstí-

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tion for us to observe any of these ordinances or ceremonies which were then prohibited, expecting spiritual good to result from the observance; and why? Even because by the proper authorities, who have power to loose as well as to bind, they have been abolished, and we should be as a leprous man washing in the Jordan and expecting to be cured, although to him no promise had been made that upon his so doing a cure would be effected; we should be seeking through an outward observance what from that observance we have no right from reason and Revelation to expect; we should be resorting to a mere charm; we might indeed be touching the hem of a garment, but it would not be the garment of our Lord.

And here you see the wisdom of that common saying among the true and faithful sons of the Church of England in these unsettled times, I stand by the Prayer Book. We are marked for taking this decided line by both the extremes, to which those who stand in the middle way are opposed: but, when we say this, we mean, that we do expect to derive spiritual advantage from a due attendance upon those ordinances appointed by authority; but from ordinances not thus authorized we may not, and we will not, look for grace; for the Lord's presence is absent from them; and the authority to which we, as members of the Anglican Church, must defer, is that of the Church of England, and for the expression of her authority we look to the Book of Common Prayer. We desire to touch the hem of our Saviour's garment; but what the garment of our Saviour is, we suffer the Church to point out to us.

On this point it has been necessary to dwell, because,

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in order to realize the blessings which may be expected to result from a strict observance of the ordinances of the Gospel, we must be fully persuaded in our minds. I have stated that according to the order of things which God hath appointed in His Church, before a gift will be conveyed, there must be faith on the part of the recipient; there is a mysterious and close connection between Faith and our reception of any Divine Blessing. But Faith is special as well as general; bearing not only on Revelation as a whole, but on the application of particular Blessings to ourselves individually. A man may be, speaking generally, a Believer; he may be fully persuaded of the truth of Christianity, and may deny none of the articles of the Christian Faith, and yet, for want of Faith on certain particular points, he may deprive himself of certain benefits which he might otherwise realize, and which are vouchsafed to others who, seeking them through Faith in the appointed means, find it done unto them even as they believe. It was not sufficient for Naaman the Syrian to believe that the Prophet of Israel could effect his cure, his cure was not effected until he believed the efficacy attached to the washing in the Jordan.

Speaking of Faith in its general nature, as possessed by all who are fully persuaded of the truth of Revelation, and of the principal doctrines of our religion, we may at once conclude that it may be predicated of all here present: you would hardly be present here without it. You all believe in God and His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the other articles of the Creed. You believe that God's promises are very

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precious, and your Faith in His promises and in His threatenings, preserves you from deliberate sin, and the commission of the more heinous offences. So far it is well. But neither in Faith nor in Works may we remain stationary. We must keep on improving. And let me ask, was this the Faith of the poor woman before us? Was this the Faith commended by our Lord in her? Her Faith was not only that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah, but that being the Messiah, He could and would heal her infirmity: this was the Faith that led her on to touch the hem of His garment. And precisely so was it with respect to the other miracles of our Lord. We are told that on one occasion two blind men followed Him, crying and saying, 'Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.'* They knew Him to be the Son of David; they addressed Him as the Messiah; they appealed to Him as to one who could work miracles. But what said our Lord? Did He declare this general Faith to be sufficient? No, His question to them had reference to the special act which He was asked to perform. Believe ye that I am able to do this? and then when, answering in the affirmative, they said, 'Yea, Lord,' then he touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your Faith be it unto you.' And because of their Faith, on His touching their eyes, an action corresponding to that of the poor woman's, in touching the hem of His garment, because of their Faith their eyes were opened; the virtue went out of Him.

Take another example, the miracle wrought on the

* St. Matt. ix. 27–31.

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Centurion's servant. When our Lord was in Capernaum there came unto Him a Centurion, beseeching Him and saying, that his servant lay at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.* You will remember that the Centurion humbly declined the honour thus offered, as being unworthy, high in office as he was, to receive under his roof the despised and rejected Man of Sorrows: and, after a blessing upon his Faith generally, our Lord, with reference to the particular case in behalf of which the application had been made, said unto the Centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. The Centurion did believe, and his servant was healed in the self-same hour. He believed what? That the Man of Sorrows was the Messiah mighty in word and in deed! the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, according to the prophecy of Isaiah? This he did, of course, believe, or our Lord would not have said, with reference to his Faith, 'Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.' This he did believe, or unto the Lord Jesus he would not have come. But although this general Faith would have been a blessing to his soul, although he would himself have been benefited thereby; this alone would not have secured the special blessing which he now asked; this would not have effected his servant's cure; this blessing he obtained as a reward to his special Faith, to his belief that as our

* St. Matt. viii. 5. St. Luke, vii. 2.

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Lord promised in this particular instance, so in this particular instance that promise would be fulfilled. Here, too, we find the same principle with regard to Faith, to which allusion was made at the commencement of this discourse: the Faith of the Centurion was not inoperative; he did not remain in his house and say, Because I believe, therefore my servant will be healed; but he came to Christ and besought Him. And when was the servant healed? in the self-same hour that Jesus spake unto the Centurion. The virtue in this instance went out of our Lord, as His mouth uttered certain words,—then, but not till then; even as the poor woman's cure was not effected until that precise moment of time when she touched the hem of His garment. Just as even now, though prepared to be blessed, we are not actually blessed, until the time comes when, by the authority of Christ, a blessing is pronounced by the Church, upon all whose hearts are qualified by Faith to receive it.

We have another very remarkable instance of the necessity of special Faith in order to obtain a special Blessing, from what occurred to the man whose son was lunatic, who met our Lord on His coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration.* 'I brought him,' he said, 'to Thy disciples and they could not cure him,'—and why? The answer is implied in our Lord's exclamation, 'O faithless and perverse generation!' Speaking generally, the disciples were not faithless: they followed the Lord Jesus, believing Him to be the Messiah: but

* St. Matt. xvii. 14. St. Mark, ix. 14. St. Luke, ix. 37.

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when applied to in order that they might effect a cure in this particular instance, they had not that faith in the powers promised to them by their Master, and for want of this faith, in this case, they, in this case, failed.

This principle is laid down by the Church in reference to spiritual blessings, when, in answer to the question, What is required of persons to be baptized, the Catechism teaches us to reply, Repentance, whereby we forsake sin, and Faith:——What Faith? Faith in the Lord Jesus? Faith in the articles of the Creed? Undoubtedly, except on the strength of this Faith, a converted person would not come to Baptism at all, nor, in the case of infants, should we, except in this Faith, bring them to the Font. This is explained, but to qualify men for this Sacrament a special Faith is required. 'Faith,' says the Catechism, 'whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.' Who knows, my brethren, but that the cause why so many fall away in these days from baptismal grace, scarcely giving outward signs of their having received it,—who knows but that the cause may be attributed to the very prevalent infidelity of rationalistic men, as to the promises of God made to us in that Sacrament? Perhaps the little apparent progress made by some who are not infrequent at the Holy Table, but whose conduct is sadly inconsistent with their professions, may, in like manner, be attributed to their want of Faith in not discerning the Lord's Body: the not discerning the Lord's Body being, according to St. Paul, one of the

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marks of an unworthy communicant. According to your Faith will it be unto you.

So is it with respect to prayer. You pray. But how do you pray? Some persons pray because they recognize in prayer an elevating act of the mind; they use prayer as others use meditation, as a means of enkindling a devotional feeling, and, unless their feelings are excited, they imagine that they are incapable of prayer. I ask, then, What is your faith? Do you believe the promises made to praying men by Christ our Lord? 'Ask,' saith our Lord, 'and it shall be given unto you.' Ask what? Our adorable Saviour again gives the answer: 'All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' And who may ask?—Again hear the infallible word addressed, of course, to the Believing, 'Every one that asketh receiveth'—either his actual petition or an equivalent. May we pray for everything? Yes, for everything, even the things which are requisite and necessary for the body as well as the soul, for everything for which we may lawfully labour, and which God has placed by His providence within our reach, and legitimate desire: 'Be careful for nothing,' saith the Apostle, 'but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' Doubtless there are many who, from their want of faith in prayer, have lost blessings temporal and spiritual for themselves and for their friends; but they who are men of prayer, and who watch special Providences, can bear testimony to the fact, that their prayers have been often answered in a manner almost miraculous.

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Not answered immediately, not answered precisely in the manner expected,—for prayer is a work of Faith, and Faith could not be exercised unless the Lord sometimes made as though He heard not—but answered eventually and effectually. If prayer were evidently and immediately answered, men indeed would cease to work, and give themselves up to prayer, instead, as now, ceasing to pray that they may devote themselves to labour. Ye who are men of prayer, know that it is to you according to your Faith: you know that you feel sometimes an irresistible impulse to pray for a particular blessing, and how in these instances it is to you according to your Faith: you also know that there is within you sometimes an unaccountable reluctance to ask God for some particular thing which might otherwise seem to be desirable, and regarding this as the voice of God the Holy Ghost within you, you abstain from prayer, so also from labouring for that thing: prayer sanctifies your labours, and your labours give energy to prayer.

Once more, how many complain of the little progress they make in godliness; of the mighty difference between the holiest Christians now and such as we read of in the Apostolic times: in him who is sanctified the Lord Jesus dwelleth, and through Him, the Mediator, God the Blessed Trinity. 'If a man love Me,' saith our Lord,* 'he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode in him.' And what is the legitimate inference from this? Let St. Paul give the

* St. John xiv. 23.

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answer: 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' For want of faith in this supernatural strength, imparted through the indwelling of Christ by His Spirit; for want of faith in the promises which as members of Christ we possess; for want of faith that 'greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world;' for want of faith that His strength is made perfect in our weakness,—how many of those things are not attempted which we are commanded to do? how many duties are omitted? what degenerate Christians we become, living in a luxurious age, scarcely, if at all, to be distinguished from the worldlings around us. Oh! my brethren, magnify your office as Christians! You are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people! Oh! think of what you may accomplish as to your souls when you have the Almighty for your helper; and depend upon it, it will be to you according to your Faith.

My brethren, it is for the sake of your souls that I would most earnestly and affectionately entreat you to think of these things,—and the more you dwell upon the efficacy of Faith, the more clearly will you see the wisdom and the design of God, in compelling us to have recourse to external means, in order to obtain spiritual gifts and divine grace. The tendency of men's minds is to rely on something of their own,—on their works for instance: the sin of relying on any presumed merits of our own is, that it detracts from our sole reliance upon Christ. But the same sin besets us under a different form, when we rely on our Faith, or on our feelings, or on our assurances: feelings the most enthusiastic in

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religion are to be encouraged; the want of religious enthusiasm, the existence of a dark, cold, formal spirit in religion is indeed one of the evil things of the age; but beware of the tempter also, when religious fervour, the result of faith, is glowing in your souls. Satan will endeavour to deceive you by inducing you to suppose that when your feelings are fervent, your faith strong, and your assurance of divine favour firm, all must then be well with you; but you may so rely on your faith, your feelings, or your fervour, as virtually to put them in the place of Christ; so to ascribe your salvation to Faith as to exclude Christ,—it is against this, it is to prevent our relying upon anything but Christ, that God requires us to have recourse, besides our faith, besides our good works the fruit of faith, to some external act, in itself insignificant, in order to impress upon our minds the fact, that while Sanctification is a work within us, we must look for Justification to something without us, or rather distinct from us. Even Adam in innocency was taught to look for the preservation of his innocent nature out of himself: for it was to this end that God gave him the tree of life. He who was commanded to eat of the tree called the tree of life, was taught thereby that the maintenance and continuance of the life he then lived, a life of grace and glory, was not to be expected from his own strength, but from something without himself. And the same great lesson is taught to Adam corrupted and fallen, when he is instructed to touch the hem of his Saviour's garment. The instruction conveyed by such action is, that whatever may be our works, our feelings, or our faith—useful, nay absolutely

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necessary in their place—yet not our works, not our feelings, not our faith, but Christ, and Christ only, is our Saviour. 'Come to Christ, come to Christ, look to Christ, and to Christ alone,' this is the constant warning of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, to all her children; 'Come to Christ, come to Christ, to Christ crucified, to Christ glorified, rely on Christ, seek to be one with Christ,' this is the one sermon preached by the Church, not merely from her pulpits, but in every ordinance, every ceremony of the sanctuary. Christ the Prophet is heard from the pulpit; Christ the Priest applies His blood in the Sacraments; Christ the King receives our homage in the ceremonies of the sanctuary; Christ our God, our all in all, is worshipped in spirit and in truth by the heart.

Love Christ; and if you do, you will prove your love by keeping His commandments; but having done all, remember that notwithstanding your love, the disease of sin is upon you, and touch the hem of His garment. Rely on Christ only for salvation, and prove that you do so, not by pleading your faith, as if faith were anything meritorious, but by permitting your faith to lead you to Christ, that you may touch the hem of His garment.

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SERMON IX.*

'*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*'—St. Matthew x. 34, 35, 36.

It is well known that the fact of which we have now read the prediction has often afforded to the infidel a subject for cavil, while, to the advocate of revelation it has not unfrequently been a source of perplexity. And a source of perplexity it must continue to be, so long as the Christian concedes what the infidel quietly assumes, that the immediate end of all religion is the promotion of peace upon earth. If the promotion of peace upon earth be the immediate end of all religion, it is quite in vain to contend, that of all religions Christianity is the best. The opponent has only to refer to the revolutions occasioned in society by the first preaching of the Gospel, to the subsequent contentions of orthodox and heretic, to the crusades, to the consequences of the Reformation,—when strife, yet unappeased, was excited not only between the Papist and the Protestant, but between those whose object was merely to bring back to its primitive purity

* [Preached at Oxford, 1847.]

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the church of their fathers, and those who established new sects, and, I might almost say, a new religion;—he has only to produce these facts, and referring to the bitter controversies still raging around us, to demand where in the history of paganism a parallel can be found. I know that, to meet the objection, we are sometimes referred to the cases of Socrates and Aristotle; but of these instances the very most that can be made is, that there are on record two solitary exceptions to the general rule of universal toleration. And as to Ombos and Tentyra, it is mere special pleading to quote the poetical exaggerations of Juvenal,* when we can be met by the express assertions of the Emperor Julian, who, in appealing to the Egyptians in favour of paganism, states it as a fact universally admitted, that an intercommunity of gods was as prevalent among them as among the other nations.† Equally useless is it to refer, as some commentators do, to the severities practised by the heathens against the primo-primitive Christians. For here the Christians were the assailants, and the heathens only acted in self-defence. The Christians were persecuted, not because they declared that Jesus was the Son of God, but because they made war upon all other religions; because they persuaded and turned away much people, saying, they be no gods which be made with hands; because they denounced everything that exalted itself, and was called a god, save Jehovah; because their

* Juvenal, Satire xv.

† Ap. S. Cyril. cont. Julian. lib. v. See the whole subject discussed, *Divine Legation*, book ii. sect. 6.

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first commandment was, 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me;' because, as Quintilian expressly says, theirs was regarded as a superstition which was the bane of all other religions. Thus St. Polycarp was condemned, because, said the people, 'he is a destroyer of our gods, who teacheth all men not to sacrifice or to worship them.' Thus, too, it was as an enemy to the gods of Rome that St. Cyprian was beheaded. So also because he refused to worship the great gods, the protomartyr of our own Church, the illustrious St. Alban, was executed. 'Who forbids you,' said the Prefect Emilian to Dionysius of Alexandria, 'to worship Jehovah also, if he be a God, together with them that be gods by nature?'* 'And why,' asks Celsus,† 'may not we be permitted to worship angels, and heroes, and demons if we will?' Whether it be or be not a fact that Tiberius proposed to the senate to enrol the name of Jesus among the gods of the empire; whether it be or be not a fact that Adrian designed to build a temple to his honour; whether it be or be not a fact that Alexander Severus worshipped him in private together with his other deities, the circumstance that these stories could be circulated and believed is sufficient to show that a compromise might have been made, and that a system which could regard with complacency the worship of different gods by six hundred nations‡ would not have admitted an exception

* Eusebius, lib. vii. c. 11.

† Origen cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 378.

‡ 'Six hundred nations,' as Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells us, 'had taken up their abode in Rome, and every one observed its own peculiar rites; and the Christians without question might have

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against Christianity if the professors of Christianity would have been contented with mere toleration, or if they would only have exercised a little liberality with respect to the liberality of others; if they would have been satisfied with affirming, 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;' without adding the concluding portion of the sentence, which must always render our religion the detestation and abhorrence of all who reject its faith, 'he who will not believe will be damned.' It was this—this assertion of the guilt of original sin, and of the need of a Saviour—which caused them to be regarded (according to Tacitus*) as haters of the human race: and as such, not as mere religionists, as the reputed enemies to the existing constitution of society, as persons prepared to turn the world upside down, but as a political party, they were ignorantly persecuted.

Now if these things be so, we can only effectually answer the opponent by denying what he takes for granted, that the promotion of peace upon earth is the immediate end and object which religion ought to have in view.

What, then, it is asked, in a tone of surprise, derision, or anger, by those who, utterly ignorant of the first principles of Christianity, love to dogmatize on what they imagine to be its precepts, is not God the author of peace and the lover of concord? Is not

enjoyed the same liberty, had they been content to enjoy it in silence; but they maintained, and that publicly, that all the deities of Greece and Rome were fictitious, and the adoration of them superstitious.' Powell, Discourse x.

* Ann. xv. sect. 44.

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the Gospel the Gospel of peace, and Christ the Prince of peace? and are we not commanded to be peace-makers? Yes, God is the author of peace, of such peace as passeth the world's understanding, such as the world can neither give, nor, blessed be God, take away; that blessed peace of mind which, resulting from a consciousness of reconciliation with a once offended Father, in order to be understood must be experienced, for an angel's tongue would fail in describing it—that holy, happy, heavenly peace of mind which has doubtless been shed abroad in the hearts of many of those who surround me, and than which I can wish no greater blessing to all who hear me. And to promote peace, harmony, and concord among their fellow-creatures, is an object, and a great object, with the Christian—all that we say is, that it is not of necessity his first, his immediate object. As much as in him lies, that is, by patience, forbearance, and forgiveness under circumstances of personal aggression and injury, he will live peaceably with all men, if it be possible; that is, if he can do so consistently with his allegiance to the cause of truth,—for the propagation of God's truth, this is his first, his immediate object.

At the expense of attention, meditation, time, study, and prayer, the Christian is to buy the truth, and then, having obtained it, he is not only to hold it fast, but to assert it, and not only to assert it, but, if need shall be, earnestly to contend for it, to strive for it, to wrestle for it with those who attempt to pervert it. Unlike the ancient heathen and the modern latitudinarian, who ask with Cain, 'Am I my brother's

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keeper? What is another man's religion to me? it is entirely between his own conscience and his God'—the Christian is instructed (so vast is the difference between Christian charity and worldly liberality) to look, not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of another; to consider others, and to provoke them to good works by the manifestation of the truth: if any man do err from the truth, we are not to leave him in his error as if it were no business of ours, but to endeavour to convert him, yea to reprove, rebuke, and exhort; and then, if he still refuse to turn from his errors, if he cause divisions and offences contrary to the word we have heard, we are to mark and avoid him, not from ill-will, but for fear of confounding right with wrong, truth with error.

To the zeal displayed by the primitive Christians in propagating the truth, the whole truth, notwithstanding the persecutions in which it involved them, notwithstanding the charges brought against them of being movers of sedition, and of turning the world upside down, we have already alluded. And so extraordinary was the fact, that the heathen philosophers attributed it to the infatuation of obstinacy,—to a degree of contumacy which Pliny pronounced to be in itself worthy of death.*

* Neque dubitabam *qualecunque* esset quod faterentur, certe *pertinaciam* et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri. Pliny, lib. x. Ep. 97. See also the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, lib. xi. sect. 3, where, after blessing the soul that is prepared to die, he adds, 'but let this preparation arise from its own judgment, and not from mere obstinacy like that of the Christians.' How utterly regardless of truth the best heathens were, may be seen in Whitby's note on Ephes. iv. 25, where he shows that even Plato admitted that 'a

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And how nobly did our own ancestors act on this same principle, when, to use the words of Bishop Ridley, 'they preferred the antiquity of the primitive church to the novelty of the church of Rome.' Without attempting to vindicate every action of the reformers, who were men like ourselves, weak, fallible, and uninspired, we ought never to forget the deep debt we owe to them for the good fight they fought against popery, which they never would have fought unless they had been fully persuaded in their minds that of all Christian duties, the first is to contend for, yea, even to die for, the truth. This zeal for the truth was the grand characteristic virtue of that age. And it is because it is not the characteristic virtue of our own age that the disputes of the Marian martyrs, when condemned to a common prison, are too often alluded to with a censure or a sneer. Whatever may be thought of the subject-matter of their dispute (which related, however, not to doctrines since called Calvinistic, but to others bordering on the Pelagian heresy),* their behaviour only shows how ineradicable was their devotion to the cause of truth, how precisely they felt, as Bishop Ridley felt and said, 'As long as my breath is in my body I will never deny my Lord Christ, and His known truth.' Let those, and only those, condemn

man might lie, if he did so in a fit season.' The answer which Christians gave to the accusation is thus expressed by Tertullian: 'Illa ipsa obstinatio quam exprobratis, magistra est. Quis enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requirendum quod intus in re sit.' *Apol.* c. 50.

* That those with whom the orthodox disputed were Pelagians, is expressly asserted by Rowland Taylor. *Strype's Cranmer*, p. 958. See also Appendix, p. 195, and Annals, p. 207.

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them who, when they argue, argue merely for victory, not as men valiant for the truth of God upon the earth, but as literary gladiators seeking to gratify their polemical vanity.

Our answer, then, to the adversary, is not by denying that Christianity has been productive of dissension, discord, and dispute, but by referring to our text to show that the divine Author of our faith did not introduce into the world a new principle of action, did not for the first time establish a dogmatic theology, without clearly foreseeing the consequence of what He was doing, without being able to foretell the incidental and occasional evil it could not fail to produce in a wicked world, without warning His followers, that although peace upon earth and good will among men was to be the final end, it would not always, or of necessity, be the immediate result of the preaching of the Gospel. If there be a revelation, the infidel will admit that the revealed religion must be the true one,—and if the true one, every modern infidel, not actually an atheist, will again admit that one of its articles must relate to the unity of the Godhead. But how will those who have gods many and lords many, how will those who exercise their craft in making shrines for their idols, bear to hear this announced? When did the thief ever regard with complacency those who come with lanterns and torches to betray his lurking place? And how can we expect the sophist, whether philosopher or religionist, to receive with approbation those whose business it is to expose his lucrative errors and ambitious follies? How can

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the worker of iniquity do otherwise than hate a religion which, instead of applying an opiate to his conscience, declares the awful truth, that they who do as he is doing will have their portion hereafter where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? Will not the truth be hated by these, and such as these? If hated, will it not be opposed? If opposed, are not they who are bound to propagate obliged also to defend it? And when one party is eager to attack, and the other bound to defend, then comes the clash of human passions, and then begins that strife which when once begun is as when one letteth out water. Therefore, so long as human nature remains as it now is, it cannot but be that of the advocacy of true religion, dissension must often be the result; and the ground of the controversy is then changed, and relates to the fact, whether or not a revelation was necessary, and has been made—a subject on which it is unnecessary to enter.

As a stone, through an unresisting medium, would speed towards the centre, so, were it not for the passions of the wicked and the errors of the weak, the promulgation of Christianity and the promulgation of peace, would be synonymous terms; and it is dishonest to bring that as a charge against revelation which ought rather to be placed to the account of human depravity. On the contrary, when we look at the mighty changes for good which Christianity has already effected upon society, directly and indirectly, we shall anticipate with full confidence the blessings which will be then universal when the earth shall be

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full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. We are to promote glory to God in the highest by propagating His truth without regard to consequences; and it is part of our faith to believe that peace upon earth and good will among men will follow ultimately, even though the immediate consequence be not peace, but a sword.

I would just pause, in passing, to observe, that if what has now been said be correct, we may see at once the error of that opinion which, since the time of Paley, has too generally prevailed: that if there is to be an established religion, that religion ought to be the religion of the majority; that we ought, in other words, to enquire, not what is the true religion, but what is the most popular. That in forming a new colony the established religion will be, most probably, the religion of the majority, is not to be denied; but why? simply because with the majority there is power to establish it. But suppose by the law of the land, the constitution of the country, the endowments of our ancestors, the influence which the better educated among the people possess in the legislature, or by any other cause, the religion of the minority be (as is the case in Ireland at the present time) the religion established, surely it is absurd to say that the minority is bound in this instance to give place to the majority. As in the former case, it was a question, not of right, but of might, so is it now, the minority, though fewer in number, being greater in power. And the simple question for them to decide is, whether their present position is the best they can take for the propagation

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of the truth among a deluded majority. If they think that by retaining the influence which the possession of property always gives, and by providing in every parish for the instruction of the people in the doctrines of truth, though the people, by refusing to hear him, do for the present render the office of the minister thus appointed a sinecure—if they think that by retaining all the advantages and privileges of an establishment the cause of true religion will be furthered, then assuredly nothing but brute force ought to induce them to forego those advantages and privileges. If, on the other hand, any man think that by the retention of these privileges the cause of truth will be retarded rather than advanced, however you may regret what may appear to be an error in judgment, you can have no right to blame him for pursuing with the same end in view a line of conduct different from your own. I say this that I may not seem to be trenching upon party politics, when, as a matter of general politics, which is part of religion, I venture to remind you, on the authority of my text, that every Christian man, whether laic or cleric, magistrate or subject, is in duty bound in this and all like cases, to consider, not what is expedient at the moment for the sake of peace, but what is beneficial to the cause of truth. Expedience may be the idol of the heathen, but truth is still the guide of him who, on becoming a legislator or a magistrate, has not ceased to be a Christian.

But here we are met by the sneering sceptic, who from the days of Pontius Pilate to the present hour,

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has been accustomed to ask, 'What is truth? It may be all very well to propagate the truth, but, after all, where is it to be found, and what is it? The Papist lays claim to it, and the ultra-Protestant lays claim to it, and both the Papist and the ultra-Protestant assert it to be what you of the Church of England refuse to admit. Why must they be wrong? and why must you, of necessity, be right?'

Now, my brethren, what does this very popular insinuation, that there is no such thing discoverable as religious truth, amount to? It amounts to nothing less than a virtual denial of the existence of revelation. I say that to insinuate that religious truth is not to be ascertained, is to insinuate that God has not revealed His will to man; and he who is guilty of the insinuation, be his professions what they may, is only an infidel in masquerade. If there be a revelation of God's will and word, then it follows as a matter of course that in the record of that revelation religious truth is discoverable. Thus the Gospel is expressly declared by St. Paul to be the word of truth, for truth, as well as grace, came by Jesus Christ.

But, says the adversary, the question still recurs, because, among those who receive the Bible, disputes exist as to what the Bible really says. It may be so. It is so. And the question now therefore is, whether this difference can be accounted for.

Now this is certain, that to anything asserted by Scripture there cannot be two contrary meanings attached. All these differences, therefore, must be occasioned by some defect, not in the object contem-

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plated, but in the persons contemplating it. Though the thing seen may be the same, it may be seen through a discolouring or distorting medium, or the eye seeing it may be diseased: when, therefore, there is some known wrong principle in the interpreter of Scripture, we are not to wonder, if, in some instances, the truth is hidden from his mental vision. Now that the mental eye, both of the Papist and of the ultra-Protestant, is jaundiced on those points where they differ from ourselves, appears from this, that both parties come to the interpretation of Scripture influenced by principles, which they would not acknowledge as correct, for the interpretation of any other ancient book.

The Papist first of all exalts tradition to an equality with Scripture, and then receives as tradition, not what is really such, that is, what has been received as such by the Catholic church, but what has at any time been decreed by that branch of the church which is in slavery to the court of Rome. Thus the canons of the council of Trent are received as traditions. The Papist, therefore, interprets Scripture, not as we do, by the light of tradition, properly so called, by reference to the opinions and practices of the primitive ages, and by deference to the authority of the church Catholic, but according to certain dogmas of a comparatively modern date of the Roman church.*

* See Waterland on Ecclesiastical Antiquity, chap. vii. Patrick on Tradition, p. 41. Stillingfleet's Rational Account, Part I. chap. v. Marsh's Comparative View, p. 45. Beveridge on the Nineteenth Article, Works, ix. 393, and especially Jeremy Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery, x. 485. Bellarmine. Tract. de Potest. Sum. Pontif.,

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The ultra-Protestant meets the Papist, though they start from the very opposite extremes. He avowedly puts aside the tradition which the Papist only virtually rejects. Instead of seeking to ascertain how the Scriptures were understood by those to whom they were in the first instance addressed, how they were interpreted by the church universal before those divisions existed which we have now to deplore, and when, therefore, (by means of corresponding churches and general councils,) the opinion of the universal church could be known, he relies entirely on his private judgment; and thus, while rejecting with indignation and scorn the claim to infallibility made by the Pope of Rome, he, in effect, converts every individual teacher, either into an infallible pope, or into a mere sceptic. I do not deny the right of private judgment as a political privilege, but to contend for it, as some persons do, as a sure guide to truth, is not only absurd, but cannot fail to involve those who do so in inconsistency as well as error.

We see, then, why these parties are not able to discover the truth, although the Bible may be open before them; there is always something intervening to prevent them from seeing the truth clearly; and we all know how very small a substance held close to the eye will eclipse the sun at its zenith. I wish not to throw blame upon them. Whether the dimness or obliquity of their vision be a misfortune or a fault, or

plainly declares 'that the modern church of Rome has power not only to declare and explain, but even to constitute and command what shall belong to the faith.'

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rather, when it is the one or the other, it is not for us to determine, who are forbidden to judge: it can be known by Him only to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid. The object, in alluding to the subject now, is simply to show that their having missed the truth is no proof that the truth is not discoverable by those who (to adopt the words of one to whom this church is much indebted, Archbishop Cranmer) 'follow the judgment of the most sacred word of God, and of the holy Catholic church.'

Nor is the discovery of the truth, though requiring much attention and study, so difficult as those who would deter us from seeking it are fond to represent. The chief difficulty relates to the formation of our principles. And here the church stands towards us in the same relation as the Apostles did towards the primitive Christians. She dogmatizes on certain articles of faith, and then requires us to act as the Bereans did after the preaching of the Apostle, to search the Scriptures, and to ascertain for ourselves whether what she says can be read therein, or proved thereby. Thus, with respect to our principles, we are to prove all things. But, having proved them, and found them to be good, we are to hold them fast, and to use them as a balance in which to weigh every theory which may afterwards be suggested; a measure by which to ascertain the height and length and breadth of every other doctrine that may be advanced. Although we may not be able to detect the fallacy of every paralogism that may be brought under our notice, yet, since it is no proof that an argument is

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correct, because I, as an individual, cannot refute it, we are justified in rejecting it at once, if it be adduced in opposition to some conclusion, of the truth of which we have been previously convinced. Being convinced of the fact that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, we are ready to admit that it would be mere waste of time to attend to any argument which should have for its object to prove the contrary. And in like manner, having ascertained that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as stated and guarded in the Athanasian creed, that bulwark to the Apostles' creed, is the doctrine of Scripture, we are not called upon (except as scholars endeavouring to convince gainsayers) to examine the statements of every heretic who may think fit to deny or explain away this article of faith. To many persons this would, indeed, be worse than a waste of time, for, intellectually as well as morally, we are in a state of probation. And if it would be infatuation in anyone to say, 'being fully persuaded of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the power of divine grace for my protection, I will frequent the society of the profligate and profane, in order to prove the virtue which, without trial, can hardly be said to exist,'—if this would be infatuation, folly, and madness, scarcely one whit less absurd is the reasoning of him who, in order to strengthen his convictions, revels in the writings of heresy, and disports himself in the gainsaying of Core. It is in fact tempting God; it is like casting oneself down from the pinnacle of the temple, to see if the angels will bear us up; it is placing ourselves wilfully in those

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very circumstances of temptation into which we daily pray, that we may not be led,—for a fool, recollect, may often have sagacity to start a question which the wisest of men may not have wisdom to solve. It is enough for us to know that opinions contrary to each other cannot both be true; and therefore, if, of the truth of our own opinions on any given subject, we are (after due and diligent examination and prayer) morally certain, we are justified in rejecting (even without examination) arguments brought forward for the support of opinions at variance with them. This the world will call prejudice. But, my brethren, what the world calls prejudice is often and generally, that resolute adherence to principle which, in the primitive Christians, was regarded as obstinacy, and, wanting which, a man becomes variable as the wind, fluctuating as the wave of the sea, changeable as the face of the earth, uncertain as the contingencies of futurity, always in motion without ever making progress, ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. But to dwell longer upon this part of our subject is unnecessary, since, whether the sceptic think that truth be discoverable or not, he will never be able to silence the Christian, whose duty it is to propagate what he believes to be such.

The chief object in selecting the present subject for my discourse is to call attention to a great principle of Christian conduct, which, in the present age, is, I fear, less influential than it ought to be among the members of the church in this nation.

Having experienced for a long period that greatest

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of all great blessings, peace and quietness, we are too apt (forgetful of our text) to consider the preservation of peace to be the first of all virtues, for the sake of which scarcely any sacrifice or concession is too great. That I am justified in saying this, a very little consideration will serve to show. When the character of a minister of the Gospel comes under discussion, what, in nine cases out of ten, is the first question asked? Is it whether he faithfully declares the whole counsel of God, as it relates both to discipline and doctrine, fearless of consequences and regardless of persons? Is it, whether, faithful to his ordination oath, he is ready to banish and drive away all erroneous, as well as strange, doctrines? Is it not rather, whether he is popular—whether he is liked—whether he is doing good to the establishment by filling the church, although perhaps his method of filling the church is merely by preaching, more skilfully than the dissenting teacher, the erroneous and strange doctrines of the meeting house? So again, in all the various and inconsistent, and sometimes most ridiculous, measures suggested on the subject of church reform. What is too generally the object proposed? Is it a fair and candid examination of the question, whether the truth be with us or not, in order that it may be more carefully guarded,—whether we have retained in our services all the old usages that we ought to have retained,—whether there be any portion of the godly discipline of the primitive church, which our ancestors wished, but were unable, to restore three centuries ago, that can be restored now? No, the question invariably is,

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as to what portions of the truth may be given up, what portions of the little discipline still left us relaxed, in order to conciliate dissenters, and to bring within the pale those who, not influenced by church principles, would soon cause us to deviate more and more from the truth. I pray that those who so act may not be more influenced by a desire to save the emoluments of an establishment, than to uphold the church of Christ in its integrity! Again,—when our support is asked for religious and charitable institutions or societies, the only thing thought of, in too many instances, is the object; if the object be a specious one, the means for its accomplishment are disregarded, though the means adopted may, by implication, involve principles of the first importance; and although, by associating with dissenters, we may pay a compliment to schism at the expense of truth. Far different were the feelings of good Bishop Ridley, when standing on this very spot he refused to move even his cap to the representatives of the Pope of Rome, lest, as he himself said, he should be thought to do it in derogation to the verity of God's word.

I know that it will be said in reply, that some truths are essential and some non-essential; and that while no inducement ought to prevail upon us to sacrifice the former, with respect to the latter we may use our discretion. But here we may ask, Who is to decide what is essential or not? A line must be drawn somewhere:—who shall decide where the line shall be? One person tells us that all the Gospel consists in the one doctrine of justification by faith, and, this

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doctrine received, all doctrines not immediately connected with it, are, in his opinion non-essential; another tells us, that the only real essential is morality; and thus each draws his line so as to admit those with whom he wishes to associate; while each party unites in the condemnation of all who are zealous for the whole counsel of God. It is a fact that in the history of the church there is scarcely any doctrine of our religion which has not at one time or other been represented as non-essential by some or other party. Admit this principle, and there is no limit to the self-deception it will occasion. Assuming that on non-essential truths it is unnecessary to insist, the careless, indolent self-deceiver will soon place in this category all those truths which, not accordant with the spirit of the age, it may be unpopular or inconvenient to maintain, or which are contrary to his interests, his passions, his self-indulgence, or his pride. If we are to make a distinction between essential and non-essential truths, between what relates *ad fidem Catholicam*, and what merely pertains *ad scientiam theologicam*, we must refer for that distinction not to our own private judgment, but to the opinion of the church; though it is scarcely possible to conceive how any portions of the truth can be sacrificed without injury to the edifice of which they form the component parts.

To this worldly spirit of preferring peace to truth, instead of truth to peace, may be traced the advice so frequently given to the young, to avoid the consideration of controverted topics, and instead of employing themselves with a single eye in the discovery

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of the truth, to look out for points upon which they can agree with others;—advice, which, if taken literally, is absurd, (for what doctrine is there, not excepting that which relates to the existence of the Deity, which has not at some time or other been controverted?) and of which the wisdom may be fairly questioned, if it be intended to refer to those doctrines concerning which disputes are rife at the present time. For these seem to be the very topics to which attention ought to be principally directed. Upon points on which all parties standing within the same line as ourselves are agreed, there is no great difficulty in making up the mind; since the mind, by a kind of *vis inertiæ*, inclines to acquiesce in the decisions of the majority. The difficulty, and the temptation to error, is with respect to doctrines of which the discussion is unpopular; and, therefore, I say, reason shows that on these should be expended, if not our first, our greatest labours. It is in defence of those portions of the truth against which the enemy of all truth directs his attack at the present time, that we are to put on our spiritual armour. This is the work marked out by Providence for us,—this is the work that our hand findeth to do,—these are the erroneous and strange doctrines, which we, of the clergy, are sworn to use our diligence to banish and drive away,—not, of course, the erroneous and strange doctrines which sleep in the grave with those who started them, but the erroneous and strange doctrines now in existence. If men, in their zeal for the truth, were to forget to interweave therewith a love of peace,

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when, without sacrifice of truth, peace could be obtained, then against that error it would be our duty to contend with all the earnestness of a Taylor or a Stillingfleet; but on these very same grounds, now that, in their love of peace, they would fain quench all zeal for truth, our business is, to sound the trumpet in Zion, and summon our sleeping Israel to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

I am well aware that the principle now advocated is a torch at which all parties may light their fires—a sword with a double edge. And I not only admit, but contend, that in order to be consistent we must never blame the dissenter, whether popish or protestant, for contending against us if he thinks us to be in error. So far from regarding the discussions which may arise from our differences with an evil eye, I would rather consider them as St. Augustin considered the controversies which heretics started in his days, as the providential means for stirring up our zeal for the truth, and even for bringing parts of the truth which might otherwise have been overlooked, more prominently forward.* 'Contrary blasts of doctrine,' as Lord Bacon says, 'do sift and winnow men's faith.' All that we demand of our adversaries is (what they may demand of us in return) that they conduct their controversies with cour-

* Multa quippe ad fidem Catholicam pertinentia, dum Hæreticorum calidâ inquietudine agitantur, ut adversus eos defendi possint, et considerantur diligentius, et intelliguntur clarius et instantius prædicantur: et ab adversario mota quæstio discendi existit occasio. *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xvi. 2. This seems to have been a favourite opinion with St. Augustin, as he repeats it often. See De Vera Relig. c. 6. n. 10, and De Dono Persever., c. 20. n. 23. tom. x.

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tesy and candour, and with that Christian charity, without which, though they speak with the tongues of men and angels, they are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

And here it is—in this proviso, that all things must be done in charity—that we find an answer to the sceptic when, in order to deter men from acting on this principle, he refers to the horrors of the Inquisition, the atrocities of Queen Mary's reign, and the massacres of St. Bartholomew's day. In attributing, in these and the like instances, the conduct of the persecutors to their zeal for the truth, he assumes the very fact which we call upon him to prove. If, in their characters, we can discover unequivocal symptoms of wrath, fierceness, animosity, contentiousness, violence, hatred, envyings, pride, avarice, ambition, why are we to attribute their evil deeds, not to these bad passions, but to the one good principle they professed, and professed, we may shrewdly suspect, with hypocrisy, since the same holy religion which calls on us to be zealous for the truth, denounces in terms the most awful, the deeds of which they were guilty, and the passions in which they indulged? But admitting that in some instances—for example, in that of Sir Thomas More, and in that of Archbishop Cranmer, this principle has been actually not only the pretext, but the cause of actions which we now universally regard with abhorrence—are we to condemn a principle because in a revolutionary period it happened to be misapplied?—if so, what principle of action is there that can abide the test? We might just as consistently accuse iron of murder, wine of drunkenness, strength

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of cruelty, courage of fool-hardiness; we might as reasonably condemn justice and disparage physic, because some men have been wronged in courts of law, and others poisoned by their physicians.

In all these instances the fault was not in the principle which was given by God, but in its application, which was made by man—not in the object aimed at, but in the means and measures adopted for its execution. How far the conduct of the persecutors of the sixteenth century (whether popish or protestant) in seeking to promote what they may have thought to be the cause of truth by iniquitous means, can be palliated by the ignorance which (owing to there not having been any controversy on the subject) prevailed, it is not for us to surmise. To their own Master they must stand or fall. That their proceedings were contrary to the principles of our church, even before the era of the Reformation, is evident from the fact that the persecutors consigned their victims for execution to the civil power—no canon being found to authorize their bloody-mindedness; that they were contrary to the principle of the church catholic might be proved by numberless citations from the fathers, especially from Tertullian, Lactantius, and St. Athanasius, wherein they expressly declare that it is the property of religion not to compel, but to persuade.* And I need scarcely stay to show

* Tertullian, ad Scap., cap. 2. Nec religionis est cogere religionem quæ sponte suscipi debet, non vi. Lactantius, Instit., lib. v. c. 19. Athanasius, Hist. Arian. ad Monach., c. 33. pp. 363, 384. In Jeremy Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying, chap. i. sect. 14, several other fathers are referred to, and others are quoted by the Archbishop of Spalato, lib. viii. de Rep. Eccl., c. 8. St. Chrysost. Homil. iv., in verba Isaiæ, vidi Dominum, etc., vol. iii. pp. 872, 873, and

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that they were contrary to the whole spirit of the Holy Scriptures, which, if they command us to speak the truth, still command us to speak it in love—if to instruct those who oppose themselves, to instruct them in meekness—to be gentle to all men; we may rebuke, but we may not hate our brother: we may admonish, but not count him as an enemy. A Christian is expressly prohibited from being a striker: the weapons of his warfare may not be carnal; and if he is to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, it is to be by well-doing.

If we bear these things in mind, if we are always careful not to do evil that good may come, and never forget that though the truth is to be propagated, it is only to be propagated by lawful and canonical means and measures, we shall not deviate into any vicious extreme with respect to this principle of action; and while we differ from the worldly politician in that when peace and truth are incompatible, he would sacrifice truth for the sake of peace, we peace for the sake of truth—we shall differ from him still more widely, when circumstances occur of a personal nature. His liberality, indeed, is marvellous, his concessions prodigious, his tenderness for weak consciences almost painful, when the question before him relates only to God's truth. But how is it when his own word is doubted—when his own honour is impeached? Then nothing will suffice but an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth—the as-

Homil. i. in Tit. vol. ult., p. 625. St. Jerome, Epitaph. Nepotiani, cap. vii. Speaking of the persecution of the Macedonians by Theodosius, bishop of Synada, Socrates expressly says, Καὶ τοῦτο ἐποίει, οὐκ εἰωθὸς διώκειν τῇ ὀρθοδόξῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Lib. vii. c. 5.

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persion cannot be wiped out, nor the injury effaced, until he has confronted his enemy, prepared to risk the awful alternative of being either a suicide or a murderer. How is it again when his property is endangered—his liberty threatened—his party defeated? then where is all this forbearance—this love of concord—this liberality—this vehement desire to preserve at all hazards the peace of society? Alas! how many a worldly politician there is who thinks scorn of a poor Christian if his zeal for the truth ever strike from him a hasty spark of anger, who to serve his selfish purposes or to gratify his thirst of vengeance would not care if he involved the whole world in bloodshed and ruin!

May the everlasting Spirit of the Father descend into our hearts, my brethren, that through his sanctifying influence our conduct may be the very reverse of this.

May no hope, no fear, no pleasure, no pain, no external force, no weakness from within, no den of lions, no fiery furnace, no cruel mockings, no moral persecution worse to bear than corporeal pangs, not the censure of the proud nor the arguments of the subtle, not the contemptuous insolence of the arrogant nor the sarcastic malevolence of the sneerer, deter us from asserting, in season and out of season, the whole counsel of God as it has come down to us from the Apostles through that blessed church which has been watered by the blood of our martyred forefathers—no, not though the consequence be loss of peace and spoiling of goods; no, not though the consequence be death to ourselves and destruction, so far as this world is concerned, to all that

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we hold dearer than life;—but, if we can conciliate friend or foe by forbearing injuries, forgiving insults, overpaying benefits, may we show by so doing that, though like St. John, the tenderest of the Apostles, we can become for the cause of truth 'sons of thunder,' yet like him, too, we can humbly endeavour to tread in our divine Master's steps, who for our sakes gave his cheek to the smiter, and has bequeathed to us his commandment that we should not avenge ourselves. It is thus that we must prove to the world that our zeal for the truth is the result not of a tyrannical temper, impatient of opposition, of a disputatious mind, or an uncharitable spleen, but of that genuine Christian charity to which the worldling loves tauntingly to refer, whilst its real character and nature are to him as colours to the blind, or as melody to the deaf; for Christian charity is not that careless indifference which countenances vice by palliating error; it is not mere good nature, nor a romantic undisciplined sentimentality; above all, it is not that selfishness which, disguised under the name of liberality, makes a man the flatterer, the sycophant, the parasite of the world, by concealing unwelcome truths, however wholesome. No! Christian charity is a sublime and steady principle, which, regardless of individual interest or ease, resulting from faith in the promises and zeal for the laws of God, undeterred by evil report and unseduced by good report, seeks the welfare of mankind not only temporal but eternal, by punishing their crimes as well as by alleviating their distresses and sympathizing with their sorrows, by exposing the sophistry of error as well as by inculcating the doctrines of truth,

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by unmasking the hypocrite as well as by rewarding the righteous, by combating the low and grovelling principles of low and grovelling minds, not less than by maintaining all those high, honourable, and ennobling sympathies and sentiments, the possession of which distinguishes man from the brute, the exercise of which exalts the citizen above the savage, the sanctification of which raises the Christian to the dignity of an angel.

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SERMON X.

'*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*'—2 Thess. ii. 15.

In addressing you on a former occasion, I ventured to protest against that system of compromise, which, from the days of Ammonius Saccas to the present hour, has always been popular among those religionists who prefer peace to truth, instead of truth to peace; but which, perhaps, never prevailed among men really serious in their views, and honest in their intentions, to the extent it does now. To sacrifice any portion of any known truth, or, which comes to nearly the same thing, to forbear from the expression of it, from any sordid care or debasing fear, in order to promote peace among ourselves, or to offer a more imposing front to the enemy, to increase our political strength, or to ward off impending persecution; to silence an adversary, or to save the advantages and honours of an establishment;—in a word, for any cause, pretext, or purpose whatever, is to act on a principle just the reverse of that which won for the primitive martyrs their crown of glory, and enabled our own forefathers to hand down to us the church in which it is our privilege to eat the bread of life. Suppose that our

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forefathers, those to whom God in His providential mercy committed the custody of His church, influenced by a different principle, had acted on a different system, and, instead of maintaining resolutely and firmly, as (peace be to their ashes) they did, the whole counsel of God, had from time to time sacrificed, for the sake of peace, here a little and there a little of what some of their contemporaries, relying on their own private judgment, were pleased to consider non-essential points:—suppose this to have been the case, and what would our position be at the present moment? Of the torn and tattered vesture of our Saviour what should we have left? With our clergy, if clergy they might still be called, stripped of all those decent adornments of office which at one time excited the spleen of the captious and the fury of the superstitious; with our sanctuaries bare of ornament as the desecrated barn of the lay-impropriator; what would have become, by this time, of our venerable ritual, our primitive liturgy, and all those other divine offices by which our souls are attuned for heaven, and brought into communion with the saints of the church triumphant, through the self-same services by which those saints themselves, through a long succession of ages, sought for and obtained sanctification, solace, and strength, while they were militant on earth? Long since they would have all been sacrificed to conciliate those who preferred the muddy waters of Geneva to the pure fountains of catholic antiquity. Where would have been that ministry which we now trace up to the Apostles, and through the Apostles to Christ?

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Long since, it would have been levelled to the dust to make way for the Presbyterian platform. To conciliate the Zuinglians the canon of the communion would have been altered, and to please Anabaptists our children would have remained unbaptized. And our Articles,—what would have become of them? They would have yielded to other Articles breathing all the horrors of an unmitigated Calvinism, unless these, too, had in their turn given way, in the last century, to an Arian creed, to gratify those who contended, that, in maintaining the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, we were narrowing the pale unnecessarily, and contending for a mere iota. Such at least would have been the case with the majority of those who are now members of the church of this land. Some few there might have been, there would have been, a chosen few, who, refusing to bow the knee to Baal, or to worship the golden image of worldly expedience, though a burning fiery furnace blazed before it, would have kept up in dens and caverns and upper rooms, amid contempt and scorn and persecution, the apostolical succession of the ministry, while they would have soothed their sufferings and sorrows by the calm but sublime and elevating devotions of the Liturgy;—and of these preserved 'as a cluster of the vintage, as a candle in a dark place, as a haven or ship from the tempest,'—of these the successors perhaps would be now beginning to creep out of their obscurity, and to win to their side, like the episcopalians of Scotland, the more sober-minded and better educated of their countrymen. But if it were so, it would not be in the churches once

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their own; it would be amid the difficulties of a bare toleration, not with the aids and appliances by which an establishment influences public opinion,—it would not be in these ancient seats of learning, but in private seminaries, where the learning which is acquired, if it be more meritorious to the individual, is less beneficial to the public. How vast, then, is the debt of gratitude which we owe to our Parkers, our Bancrofts, our Sheldons, who bravely dared the execrations of their own age,—execrations of which the cuckoo cry is still iterated by our popular historians,—in order that they might hand down to us those doctrines and institutions and sacred offices, and that primitive and apostolical discipline, of which men are beginning to understand and acknowledge the value How gratefully ought we to recognise the guiding hand of Providence, which, in spite of the erastianism of some, and the puritanism of others, the Calvinism of one party, and the Arminianism of another; the desire on the one side to conciliate popish, and on the other to amalgamate with protestant dissenters, has preserved to us in this land, unworthy as we are, the holy catholic church,*—which, when at the Revolution Latitudinarianism was in the ascendant, and was levelling a fatal blow at our orthodoxy of doctrine and discipline, raised up in the nonjurors an opposition numerically weak, but morally strong, and so rendered it impossible for our then rulers to dare what they desired.

Now to all this I am well aware that an answer

* See note 20, at the end of the volume.

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may at once be given in accordance with the spirit of the age. When we ask, where would our religion have been, had our predecessors sacrificed truth for the sake of conciliation, it would be answered by many, in the Bible. But to this we may reply, in the first place, that the mere possession of the Bible could not restore to us, what our ancestors were reviled for not renouncing, the succession of the ministry; without which, though in the Bible we should read of sacraments generally necessary to salvation, and of preachers who ought to be sent, yet we should find no one with credentials to prove his authority to act as an ambassador from Christ, or to officiate as the minister and steward of God's mysteries. But, omitting this circumstance, let us come to yet closer quarters with our opponent. And I will ask, of those here present, who they are, and what their number may be, who have worked out their system of religion from the Bible and the Bible only? who have built the fabric of their faith from the materials, and only from the materials, which they themselves, without foreign aid, have gathered, assorted, and compared from the Scriptures?

'The Bible,' it has been well and wisely observed, 'though a most sacred is a most multifarious collection of the records of divine economy,—a collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books by different authors at different ages, and, though shaped to the same holy end by the superintending and sug-

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gesting Spirit of God, with different purposes in view by the authors themselves. It is necessary to sort out what is intended for example, what only as narrative, what is to be understood literally, what figuratively; where one precept is to be controlled and modified by another; what is said directly, and what as an argument *ad hominem*; what is temporary, and what of eternal obligation; what appropriated to one state or set of men, and what to the general duty of Christians.'* Now all this is to be done, if on the Bible and the Bible only we depend for instruction, before our code of morals or system of divinity can be formed. And where is the intellectual son of Anak, who, amid the various claims of society, is sufficient for these things? If this were the business and duty of each individual, who could become a Christian before he had descended far into the vale of years, unless he could make up for his deficiency of age by the intensity of his studies? and even then it would be necessary to add to closeness of application, acuteness of intellect and clearness of head? The impossibility of such a proceeding is tacitly admitted even by those who, in theory, take the opposite position, in that they declare, that whatever is fundamental and necessary for salvation is obvious and plain, forgetting all the while that they are thus assuming the very point at issue, since, with respect to what is fundamental and necessary to salvation, they require us to take for granted their own assertions, and to admit, at the same time, upon authority only, the authenticity and genuineness of the

* Burke. Speech on the Act of Uniformity.

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books we receive for Scripture, as well as the correctness of the version we use. For plain and obvious are only relative terms;—what is plain and obvious to you may not be so to me, and *vice versâ*: so that one sect or party will pronounce that to be the plain and obvious sense of Scripture, of which another party will predicate just the reverse. But the time will not permit, nor does the occasion require, that we should dwell longer on this point, since we have only to look at the facts of the case. And is it not a fact, with respect to the great mass of mankind, that their religion, like their habits, is hereditary; that their opinions are the opinions of their fathers or instructors, corrected and modified it may be, but essentially the same? Is not this, and must not this be the case with the labourer, who is unable, and the handicraftsman who, except for a few hours on the Lord's day, has no time to study the Bible? And even with respect to the better educated classes of society, even with respect to men of learning, does it make no difference as to the amount of their labour, and consequently as to their proficiency, with what feelings, and sentiments, and prejudices, and principles they come to the investigation of Scripture, with what data they start? If we make an enquiry, the mind will, naturally of itself, first form or receive an hypothesis to give a direction to that enquiry; and is it nothing whether the hypothesis so formed be in favour of or against the truth? Does it signify nothing through what medium the Scripture is viewed? The fire may be the same, but does it matter nothing whether it is to operate on metal, on

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fuel, on wax, or on clay?—does it matter nothing to what substance the solvent is applied? There is no law so clear but that an objection can be raised against it by a pettifogger; and there is no passage of Scripture so plain but it may be misinterpreted, misunderstood, or explained away by those whose minds have been contracted and their understandings sophisticated by the prejudices of sect or the subtilties of system. Why is it that the Papist, the Presbyterian, the Calvinist, the Arminian, the Socinian, draw inferences so contradictory from the same passages of Scripture? Is it not occasioned by the fact of their education, of the circumstances under which they are placed, of their hereditary opinions, whereby the one party has been accustomed from childhood to consider as a figure, allegory, or emblem, what the other would interpret literally; while all would occasionally demand admissions which the rest would regard as unreasonable? It is this that makes their conversion, though not impossible, yet certainly a work of difficulty and labour, unless occasioned by some great national convulsion by which the whole order of society is reversed.

If, then, man being an imitative animal, the circumstances under which we are placed, the opinions, manners, feelings, prejudices, examples, and institutions by which we are surrounded, are much to us all, and everything to some of us, does it not become necessary that those who by their station, learning, or talent, have an influence over public opinion, should diligently compare the doctrines they have received from their ancestors with holy writ; and after they are convinced

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in their minds that they have the truth as God revealed it, should watch over it with a holy jealousy, creating around them as it were a bright pellucid atmosphere by which it may be at once apparent to others, and forming those moral sentiments which, as they precede, so they capacitate the mind for logical deductions, and at the same time to assist those who see by placing them in the best situation for taking a clear and extensive view.

I said, and I repeat it, that such men are sedulously and anxiously to compare the doctrines they have received with holy writ,—for let it not be for a moment supposed that I would deny that most important truth, that the Bible, and the Bible only, is our rule of faith. It is to the neglect and subsequent denial of this solemn fact that almost all the errors of the popish system are to be traced, and against that perversion of Christianity we must resolutely contend that nothing may be imposed as an article of faith, or as necessary to salvation, but what may be read in Scripture, or proved thereby. All that I assert is, that no men actually do, and few men living in society could, form from the Bible only their religious and moral system; while, on the other hand, I not only admit, but confidently assert, that to confirm, to prove, or to disprove the truth of the system they have inherited, the system transmitted to them, this is what all men of education can do, and what (the capacity premised) all men are bound to do. For although Scripture may not of necessity be the source from which all our doctrines were immediately imbibed, yet it is the infallible

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touchstone by which they are to be tried, the balance of the sanctuary in which they are to be weighed, the measure by which they are to be corrected. And the difference between the two processes, between forming a creed for ourselves and proving the truth of a creed which we have received, is obvious. In this congregation there are many who have skill to demonstrate the truth of the Newtonian theory, but of those, how many are there, who, by merely studying the book of nature, could have discovered the principle of attraction, and then have applied it for the explanation of the solar system? Of those who apply the prism to the decomposition of a ray of light, who are they who, if Newton had not lived, could have discovered its adaptation to the purposes of science? In like manner, there are, I hope, none here present who cannot demonstrate from Scripture the truth of those doctrines which are contained in the three creeds,—but if they had never heard of those doctrines before, though they would be still in Scripture, we may safely say, that the notions of many among us, on many of these doctrines, would have been anything but satisfactory and clear. It is thus that we are to search the Scriptures, which are given us for our comfort, so also to enable us to prove all things; all those things which, from the various circumstances of education and the tradition of the church, we have received; and of these things we are to hold fast that which, after such examination, we find to be good.

Now if we search the Scriptures for the purpose, we shall find these positions fully established,—for we

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find from Scripture that it was not by Scripture that our holy religion was first propagated and established, 'Prior sermo,' says Tertullian, 'quam liber, prior sensus quam stylus.' * The Apostles and Evangelists did not sit down, and, acting on a principle contrary to that pursued in the Old Testament, compose a body or system of morals and theology; they did not approach the Gentiles and say, here are certain Scriptures composed by inspiration of God,—take them, understand them as best you can, and form out of them a religion each man for himself; on the contrary, they placed their contemporaries in the precise situation in which circumstances have placed their successors,—they gave them a religion antecedent to Scripture—a form of sound words—the one faith or summary of things to be believed—a ὑποτύπωσις, or compendium of orthodox doctrine—a good depositum or trust, to which they were exhorted to hold fast,—while from those who walked disorderly and not after the traditions thus received, they were commanded to withdraw themselves; and no sooner was a bishop appointed over one of the apostolical churches than the direction given by St. Paul to that bishop was, 'The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou'—(not to writing, but παράθου, commit in trust,) 'to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.' †

* Tertull. de Test. An. c. 5.

† ii. Tim. ii. 2. Quid est depositum? id est quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum; quod accipisti non quod excogitasti: rem non ingenii sed doctrinæ: non usurpationis privatæ sed publicæ traditionis: rem ad te perductam non a te prolatam: in qua non auctor debes esse sed custos; non institutor sed sectator; non ducens

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Now, what is this but saying in other words, lay the foundation of that which (adopting the term from St. Ambrose) I have ventured to call an hereditary religion—a religion which, handed down from generation to generation, may spread like the roots of a tree on and below the surface of society, forming a germinating principle of piety, blending itself with men's modes of thought, and thus influencing indirectly, even when its direct influence is not sought. Here is the foundation, the pillar, the ground of the truth. But, of course, such a religion would soon be liable to corruption, through the weakness of misapprehension in some, and the wickedness of misrepresentation in others. As a safeguard against this, we possess the Scriptures. This, indeed, is precisely stated by St. Luke. Theophilus, whoever he was or represented, (and if he represented the ordinary Christian, it makes the case more strong,) had been already instructed in the doctrines and duties of the Christian profession,—the Gospel of St. Luke was sent to him to declare the certainty of those things which he already believed, that is, that he might be able to ascertain therefrom whether he had been correctly instructed. In like manner, with respect to the Epistles, they were written, not to convert heathens, but to instruct converts, and to correct the mistakes which from time to time arose in the traditional religion of the different churches; and thus the Gospels and Epistles remain to us, at the

sed sequens. Depositam inquit custodi; Catholicæ fidei talentum inviolatum illibatumque conserva. Quod tibi creditum, hoc penes te maneat, hoc a te tradatur. *Vincentius Lirinensis*, c. xxvii.

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present day, like the two olive-trees standing by the golden candlestick, not to supersede the use of the candlestick, but to supply it continually with holy oil. We find it, indeed, assumed in Scripture, that of many duties we shall learn the obligation elsewhere; while the injunctions of the inspired volume simply imply their obligation,—(thereby enabling us to prove it,)—by instructing us as to their mode of performance. It is assumed for instance, that to the end of time Christians will know it to be obligatory upon them to fast, to pray, and to give alms: the scriptural directions are therefore confined as to what we are to do when we fast, when we pray, when we do our alms-deeds. The Bible is not particular as to how we gain our faith, it only requires that this faith should exist, and then supplies us with the means of establishing it.

And this was the principle on which we find the fathers of the Church to have acted. The heretic, professing his reverence for Scripture only, would put upon the words of Scripture his own meaning, and then argue that, since they could bear that construction, he was justified in abiding by his conclusions. And thus by Scripture, capriciously interpreted, could every vagary of the intellect be justified; for we have only to look through the coloured medium of our imagination to read in Scripture whatever we please. The argument of the fathers with these persons was short and conclusive. 'We have no such doctrine,' they would say, 'neither the churches of God.' They appealed to what had been universally received and acted upon in the apostolical churches; and they

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argued, if this doctrine can be established by the written word, this is the doctrine which was actually revealed, and ought consequently to be received, however specious your argument for what is merely a private opinion originating either in pride of intellect, the weakness of superstition, or the reveries of fanaticism. The question was not, and is not, what sense will the Scripture bear, but what has, in fact, been revealed. It is by bearing this in mind that we make consistent passages in the fathers which might otherwise appear inconsistent, and thus gain a strong argument against the papist; for instance, when we find them at one time referring to the tradition of the church as a guide that they would be most unwilling to forsake, and at another maintaining with all the vigour of their argument that Scripture, and Scripture alone, was the rule by which the truth of any doctrine could be proved. Tradition supplied the hypothesis, the Church asserted the proposition, and Scripture gave the proof.

And was not this the principle upon which our ancestors here in England acted, when three centuries ago they banished from the church of their forefathers the abominations of popery? Did they imagine so vain a device as that every man might go to the Bible, and that too a translated one, and carve from thence a religion for himself? If they did, how strangely inconsistent was their conduct in publishing their Institutions and Necessary Doctrines, their injunctions and articles, and catechisms and canons, and homilies,—how much more inconsistent their having recourse to legal means

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to silence those who, as they thought, were corrupting, instead of correcting, the opinions of the age! Censures have been past on distinguished foreign reformers for their inconsistency in asserting for themselves the right of private judgment, and yet anathematizing others, when, by the exercise of the same right, they came to opposite conclusions. How they are to be defended it is not for me to say. Suffice it for us to know, that against our own ancestors no such charge can be established. If they did not admit the right of private judgment in others, they did not attempt to exercise it themselves. They deferred to Catholic tradition on all doubtful points,—but they took leave to enquire, what Catholic tradition really was, and thus to distinguish it from popish assertion. We have only to refer to their writings to see how sensitive they were when anyone insinuated that they wished to depart from catholicism. This might very easily be proved, if the time permitted, by an induction of particulars;—as it is, I will simply refer to one of the latest and most elaborate works of one of our reformers, whose disposition inclined him perhaps to defer, more than others, to the opinion of foreign Protestants;—I allude to Cranmer's answer to Gardyner, and there we shall find him declaring, that the sense of our Saviour's words must be sought from the old writers, that he impugns not the true Catholic faith, but the false papistical faith; that he spurns with indignation the idea of his meaning to set aside the word Catholic, or of his going about,—I use his own words,—of his 'going about by his own wit, to prove his doctrine, howsoever

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Scripture hath hitherto been understood.' Nay, speaking of the Lutherans, of whom Gardyner had said that they took his view of the subject, Cranmer remarks, that supposing they did, yet the ancient authors which were next to Christ's time may not give place to these new men, although they were men of excellent learning and judgment; while in his last solemn appeal to a general council at his degradation, he declares:* 'Touching my doctrine of the Sacrament and other my doctrine, of what kind soever it be, I protest it was never my mind to write, speak, or understand anything contrary to the most holy word of God, or else against the Holy Catholic Church of Christ, but purely and simply to imitate and teach those things only which I have learned of the Sacred Scripture and of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ from the beginning, and also according to the exposition of the most holy and learned fathers and martyrs of the Church. And if anything hath, peradventure, chanced otherwise than I thought, I may err, but heretic I cannot be, forasmuch as I am ready in all things to follow the judgment of the most sacred word of God, and of the Holy Catholic Church.' There is more to the same effect; and consequently, if at any time this great man, amidst his many cares, deviated from catholicism, while we correct his error, we should remember to attribute it not to any defect in his principle, but merely to a mistake in its application. The principle which he professed was acted upon by Ridley, and Parker, and Jewell, and their worthy

* Archbishop Cranmer's Remains, published by the Rev. Henry Jenkyns, vol. ii.

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successors, at the Hampton Court and Savoy conferences, and procured for the members of the church, from Neal the historian, the designation, in mockery, of traditioners.

And acting upon this principle, what was it that the great and good men who conducted the Reformation in this country did? Having found an hereditary religion in the land, they compared it, as they were bound to do, and as we are bound to do, with Scripture; and they soon discovered many practices and opinions prevalent, inconsistent therewith, and contradictory thereto. Patiently pursuing these errors to their source, they soon discovered that they were mere innovations of a comparatively modern date,—fungous excrescences which might be easily removed without injury to the tree to which they were attached; and their endeavour was to eradicate from the hereditary religion all papistical novelties, leaving uninjured and untouched what was really catholic. Their object was not to obliterate the old transmitted religion, but merely to correct certain abuses then in existence—to restore it, in short, to its primitive lustre and fragrance,—not to pluck the fair rose of Sharon, but to crush the serpent which lurked beneath its leaves,—not to stop the sun in its course, or to force it from its orb, but to dispel the clouds by which it had become partially eclipsed,—not to destroy the body, but to remove disease from the limbs,—not to dash away the cup out of the people's hand, and thus to leave them without the means of spiritual refreshment, but to precipitate to the bottom the deleterious drugs which an enemy had

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thrown in; they found in existence a stream which flowing from the living Rock, had followed the spiritual Israel of God from the first ages of Christianity, but of which complaint was made that in this part of the world the waters had become bitter; and in the spirit and power of Moses and Elisha, these commissioned prophets of the Most High, together with the rulers of the people, went forth unto the springs of the waters, and cast into them the salt of God's word, and said, Thus saith the Lord, 'I have healed these waters,' and so the waters were healed unto this day.

Thus may we see that with the holy Apostles, the primitive Fathers, and our own Reformers, the simple object being the maintenance and propagation of God's revealed truth, they sought to promote that object, not by the Bible only, or by transmissive religion only, but by the reciprocal influence and conjoined operation of both,—the one suggesting, the other confirming,—the one by the inculcation of moral sentiments and the adoption of the means of grace, training the mind and preparing the soul,—the other given by inspiration for doctrine, for confutation, for correction or amendment, for instruction in righteousness. If it be said that by this system prejudices are created rather than dispelled, we may admit the fact, and then remind you what a prejudice is. A prejudice is defined to be an opinion which we hold on the authority of another, but the correctness of which we have not as yet proved for ourselves. To believe, then, a fact or doctrine from prejudice rather than from demonstration or discovery, is by no means irrational, provided that our authority

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is a good one. It is thus, indeed, that the greater part of our opinions are acquired. The fault with respect to a prejudice is, not the being influenced thereby, but the being influenced too much,—it consists not in its existence, but in its excess, which is called bigotry. For a man who associates with his fellow-creatures to imagine that he can come to the consideration of any important subject without preconceived opinions, that is, without prejudice, is mere self-deception; he must either be prejudiced in favour of those tenets in which he has been educated, or (which is generally the sign of a bad disposition) prejudiced against them, or his will be of all bad prejudices the very worst, a morbid prejudice against a prejudice, under which calamity, when a man unfortunately labours, he becomes a weak, miserable, vacillating being, always discussing, but never capable of any great or good action, being like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. Therefore it is that in the revelations we have received from Him to whom all hearts are known, in the Old Testament as well as the New, parents, instructors, and legislators are enjoined, not to provide that the minds of their offspring or their people shall be unprejudiced, but to labour that their prejudices shall be good ones, prejudices in favour of faith, and truth, of God, of virtue, and of the church.

The question between ourselves and the papists is not whether any authority is due to a particular church, but what degree of authority. There is surely a medium between an infallible authority and no authority whatever. Our earthly parents or guardians are not

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infallible, yet still they were, in the first instance, and they continue to be, our authority for believing much that we do believe on subjects human as well as divine, philosophical not less than theological. Man does not come into the world, as some sophists would represent, a universal sceptic. It is precisely the reverse. He comes into the world a credulous being, prepared to receive for truth all that he hears. This, being the excess, is an error, and the fault is corrected gradually by experience, and he becomes, not even then a universal sceptic, but merely a cautious believer. The facts he received at first on authority, if questioned, he examines for himself, correcting them if he finds them to have been erroneous, and improving on them, and thus advancing nearer to perfection, when he finds them to have been correct. And where is the absurdity of acting on the same principle with respect to religion, —of receiving, in the first instance, certain doctrines and articles, because our holy mother the church assures us that they are the doctrines of Scripture, and the church universal, of which she is a part, though we may not as yet have compared them ourselves with holy writ? Where is the absurdity of obeying the Holy Ghost, and permitting the church in which we have been educated thus to become to us the ground and pillar of truth?—for, let it be remembered, that it was of a particular, and therefore of a fallible church, that St. Paul spake these words. Where is the absurdity of permitting the church to act towards us, as the woman of Samaria to the men of Sychem? She testifies to us of Jesus, on her authority we come into his

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presence, on her testimony we are inclined to receive Him as the Son of God, and happy are we if after a time we can say, 'Now we believe not because of thy word,'—not merely on that account, which led us to believe in the first instance, but because we have heard him ourselves, and know, by patient investigation and the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit upon our souls, that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

If it be said, that in challenging this authority, not merely for the church universal, but for a particular church, we cannot, if we would be consistent, censure the sectarian for paying the like deference to his sect, I answer, at once, we ought not to do so. The child that is born of ignorant or evil parents has many and great difficulties to encounter in order to arrive at that degree of information or virtue, which is attained, with comparative ease, by those who are more happily circumstanced. So is it with respect to those who have been brought up in the bad prejudices of a sect; there is a strict analogy between the two cases. And in attempting to convert a sectarian, I should never wish to shake that good principle which might lead him to defer to the system in which he was educated, I should rather say, (confident in the righteousness of my own cause,) 'Wherever there is a doubt as to the meaning of Scripture, if you cannot ascertain the opinion of the church universal, let it be interpreted in favour of your sect, and then see whether, in spite of this, you are not in error.' If you adopt a different course, you may perhaps shake a man's faith in the opinions of his sect;

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but having robbed him of a right, though a humiliating, principle of action, it is very doubtful whether you will convert him to the truth, whether you will have done more than prepare him to sink from one creed to another until at length he settles in the lowest depth of scepticism or unbelief. In making converts, as in too many of our modern religious proceedings; the end aimed at is too often regarded exclusively of the means to be adopted, and our exertions consequently terminate in disappointment and disgust.

While what has thus now been advanced may tend to show the importance of not compromising the truth as it is in Jesus, at a time when infidel superstition is seeking to take from, as, in times past, popish superstition endeavoured to add to, the word of God, I hope it will be fairly examined and duly weighed by my younger brethren, especially by those who are intended for holy orders. Let them remember that at the commencement of their career, at all events, the usages of the church ought to be the subject not of their criticism, but of their meditation—that, as the son of Sirach says, they ought to examine the matter before they blame, and to understand before they rebuke,—that in yielding to the authority of the church, the question is not whether they can see the wisdom of her regulations, but simply whether the observance of those regulations be a sin,—that, to say the very least of it, in every instance, the church is more likely to be right than an inexperienced individual,—that, as Bishop Taylor observes, with his usual wisdom, authority is a good rule of acting until a stronger comes.

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Let them eschew that proud restlessness as to received opinions by which the irreligious world is characterized, and avoid the presumption of those, who, without examination, think it a sufficient excuse for neglecting some parts and altering others of our ritual, for curtailing an office here and omitting a creed there,—to say 'I do not see the use of doing this; I do not see the harm of leaving undone that;' as if I were infallible. No, my brethren, I hope that you will treat with more deference and respect the authority of the church, through whose good offices you were spiritually born, and through whose tender care you have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and taught to rely for salvation, and to rely only, on the atoning merits and sanctifying Spirit of your Saviour. And this I will promise you, that if, thus commencing, you proceed to enquire with caution, and determine with humility, you will daily find more and more cause to bless your God, that you have descended from those who, in conducting the Reformation, were not proud in their own conceits, but asked for the old paths, and made straight the good way in which by a providential concurrence of circumstances you are placed. You will gradually discover the importance of much which you may now deem trivial, and see wisdom in what you may, at one time, have regarded as defects. Commence with treating the church as your mother, and you will end in finding her to be, as she is, a most holy mother, whom you will love, not merely as a means, but as an end; whom you will delight to honour, and for whom you will be prepared,

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as in these perilous times we all ought to be prepared, to die. You will reverence her as the Spouse of Christ, as the King's Daughter all glorious within, with her clothing of wrought gold, and her garments smelling of myrrh, aloes, and cassia;—you will venerate her for the majestic simplicity and calm dignity with which she administers to her children, not intoxicating cordials, but the sincere milk of the word; for her zeal without intolerance, her moderation without lukewarmness, her faith without fanaticism, her piety without superstition; you will delight in evincing towards her your filial piety, by performing all the offices she imposes upon you, not coldly, according to the letter, but according to the fulness and fervour of her meaning: and though you may find cause to lament that the hands of her discipline are crippled by the jealousy of the state, yet this will not prevent your addressing her with the feelings of chastened enthusiasm, and saying, 'though not infallible, thou hast not failed.'

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SERMON XI.

'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'—Jeremiah vi. 16.

We frequently hear persons referring to the sentiments and quoting the opinions of the reformers, foreign and domestic, of the sixteenth century, as if they were authoritative in the interpretation of Scripture, and as if it were incumbent upon us to be silent whenever they may speak. Yet why we should pay more of deference to the opinions of wise and good and learned men of the sixteenth century, than we do to the opinions of wise and good and learned men of the nineteenth century, is a question more easily asked than satisfactorily answered. Why should Luther, or Melanchthon, or Calvin be regarded, extrinsically, as commentators of Scripture, more skilful than any who have succeeded them, and who, in many respects, have possessed superior advantages? Why should Cranmer, or Ridley, or Latimer, be more free from error than our present metropolitan and his suffragans? Good men they doubtless were, and great men, but still they were only gifted with those ordinary graces of the Spirit which the church still dispenses. Our debt to them is great

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for their exertions against popery; our debt to our own reformers is greater still for their having, in most instances, clearly marked the difference between true Catholicism and Romanism, and their example in contending for, yea, in dying for, what they believed to be God's truth, is to be zealously upheld, as worthy of imitation, to an age more distinguished for light than for love. But still they were not infallible, they were not faultless;—in many respects they were all of them faulty; and therefore, when to their dicta an appeal is made, as if from their decisions it were almost heresy to depart, we may fairly demand the grounds on which such authority is made to rest.

But although their authority cannot be established, although the reformers were not one whit more infallible than the Pope of Rome, yet the fact that their writings are published and quoted as works to be referred to for the decision of controversies, proves that some authority is wanted,—that the human mind, amid the prevailing collision of sentiment, while Scripture is made to speak one thing by this party and directly the reverse by that, is desirous of finding an umpire to whose decisions it may bow. The Roman church is loud in her boastings and promises on this head; and, as assertions are often taken for facts, we may attribute to this circumstance the many converts made to the popish system, wherever its more hideous features are concealed, and among those who are deficient in learning to perceive, that the claims of the Pope of Rome can be substantiated, neither by Scripture, nor by the consent of the universal church, (the

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Greek church even to this day protesting against popish usurpation as rigorously as we do ourselves,) nor by anything like primitive practice. These claims have been, in fact, a gradual encroachment upon the liberty of the church, of which almost each step can be distinctly traced.

But, admitting that the authority neither of popish prelate nor of protestant reformer can be established; admitting, and contending as we do for, the sufficiency of Scripture, does it follow that there is no authority to be discovered sufficient to determine our judgments when Scripture appears to be ambiguous, or when from the same passages contradictory doctrines are inferred? Not so, says the Church of England. Her spirit may be gathered from the rules given to our divines, when, in the early days of the Reformation, they were appointed to hold conference with certain popish priests and jesuits.* 'If they, the papists, will show any ground of Scripture, and wrest it to their own sense, let it be showed by the interpretation of the old doctors, such as were before Gregory I.' 'If they can show no doctor that agreed with them in their said opinion before that time, then conclude that they have no succession in that doctrine from the Apostles' time and above four hundred years after, when doctrine and religion were most pure; for that they can show no predecessor whom they can succeed in the same.' 'Quod primum verum.' † Would that those unauthorised individuals and self-appointed polemics,

* Strype's Life of Abp. Whitgift, vol. i. p. 196.

† Tertullian. De Præscript. cxxix.

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who rashly and presumptuously challenge the Romanists to discussion in the present day, had never forgotten the rules laid down by the church to which they still profess to belong, when she thus sent forth her children to fight with the enemy!

But it was not only with respect to the Romanist that this rule was observed; when a commission was issued for the trial of heretics, an especial provision was made that no spiritual person should have any authority or power, however commissioned, to determine or judge any matter to be heresy, but only such as had heretofore been determined, or ordered, or adjudged to be heresy by the canonical Scriptures, or by the four first general councils.* Nor is it only with respect to heresies that this rule is to be observed; it is also expressly ordained by canon, that the clergy, in their exposition of doctrine, shall receive as their guide, in subordination to Scripture, the catholic fathers and primitive bishops.† The same rule was laid down for the observance of the divines commissioned to make that version of the Bible which we still retain; for they were directed to refer to 'the most celebrated fathers, when any word had several significations;'‡ and we still find the rule enforced in the proclamation for the last review of the Book of Common Prayer; the duty of the persons appointed for that purpose being declared to be, 'to compare the same with the

* Collier, Eccles. Hist. pt. ii. bk. vi. 421.

† Liber Canon. Discip. Eccles. Angl. A. D. 1571. Canon de Concionatoribus.

‡ Collier, ii. bk. viii. 694.

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most ancient liturgies that have been used in the church in the primitive and purest times. * But other documents it must be unnecessary to produce, in order to prove the deference for antiquity, which has ever since the Reformation been evinced by the church in this country; for what indeed are our creeds, but the creeds unaltered of the primitive church? What are our articles and homilies but the mere application of ancient principles to modern controversies and practices, intended chiefly as a direction to those who want either means or ability to consult the original authorities? What is our Common Prayer Book itself but a digest of the prayers which have been used in the church universal from the remotest antiquity?

The rule therefore in the Church of England is this:—we receive our doctrine from the present church with due deference, but, admitting the possibility of error, we prove what we have thus received by Scripture; and when we are doubtful as to the meaning of Scripture, we then seek to ascertain the primitive tradition by having recourse to the writings of the fathers and the history of the church. For example, we receive the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the church, who states it in her articles and creeds, and practically enforces it in her liturgy; but since the church in this country is not infallible, we go to Scripture to discover whether what she asserts be really so or not; but of the passages adduced from Scripture, the Socinians and Arians put on some, a meaning different from that which we are inclined to think

* Collier, ii. bk. ix. 827.

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correct;—here, then, we go to the primitive church, and according to her interpretation we consider the question to be decided.*

But here the argument may be thought to recoil. The mere circumstance of an opinion being ancient is no proof of its being true, and it may be fairly demanded, why the opinions of learned men in the second or third century should have more authority than the opinions of learned men of the sixteenth century; why the opinion of even a Gregory or a Chrysostom should have more weight than that of Cranmer or Ridley, supposing the latter to be equal with the former in ability? And doubtless there would be some force in this objection, if this were a question merely of opinions, but it is really a question not of opinion but of fact. It is not to discover the opinions of individuals, however worthy of consideration the opinions of great and good individuals may be, that we go back to the early days of Christianity, but it is to ascertain what was once for all delivered to the saints by the inspired Apostles; to discover what traces remain of the doctrine and discipline ordained by them when they founded those primitive churches from which all others have descended;—a tradition which we use, not, like the papists, because we think the Scriptures to be insufficient, but to enable us to elucidate and under-

* 'I use herein the wise counsel of Vincentius Lirinensis, whom I am sure you will allow, who giving precepts how the catholic church may be, in all heresies and schisms, known, writeth in this manner: "When one part is corrupted with heresies, then prefer the whole world to that part: but if the greater part be infected, then prefer antiquity."' Bishop Ridley, *Wordsworth's Biog.* vol. iii. p. 230.

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stand more clearly what Scripture enjoins or reveals, to ascertain the meaning, the precise meaning, when more meanings than one can be extracted from the same passage; and thus to prevent the fancies of visionary men from usurping the place of God's truth, under the plea and appearance of that scriptural authority they do not really possess.

Now if we could discover the system of doctrine which the Apostles delivered to the churches they founded, everyone, I presume, would be ready to admit that this system would claim due deference from sound reason as well as from Christian humility. The objection I apprehend to be this; that to discover this *traditio exegetica* is impossible;—an objection more easily stated than confirmed.

A very slight acquaintance with the early history of the church will serve to convince us, first, that the primitive Christians acted upon precisely the same principle on which the Church of England still acts, namely, that on all disputed points of scriptural interpretation, before they came to a decision, they were accustomed to make enquiry as to what had been delivered to the apostolical churches; and, secondly, that, for the first four or five centuries at least, the greatest possible care was taken to preserve this *traditio exegetica* in its purity

As to the first point, it need not detain us long; for to what but to this does Irenæus refer, when speaking of the κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας?* To what but to this does

* Adv. Hæres. lib. i. cap. 9. § 4. See the whole subject admirably treated by Irenæus. Regula Fidei. Edit. Routh, p. 690.

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Clemens Alexandrinus refer, when speaking of the *κανὼν ἐκκλησιαστικός*? * What is the whole of Tertullian's admirable book, De Præscriptione, but an application of this principle to existing controversies? Now the mere circumstance that this principle was avowed, the profession of it being the very principle which distinguished the catholic from the heretic,† would incline us to conclude that steps would be taken, to preserve the tradition, at least in its important features, genuine and pure. The opposition of the heretics would conduce to this end, as the heretic would, of course, put the catholic or orthodox to silence at once, if he knew of a church in which the doctrine asserted

* Strom. lib. vi. c. 15. In the Recognitions of Clement, a work of the second century, a very striking passage occurs, which I cannot refrain from transcribing. After having observed that there are many passages in Scripture which are capable of being drawn to that sense in favour of which we are prejudiced, he proceeds, 'Non sensum, quem extrinsecus attuleris, alienum et extraneum, debes quærere, quem ex Scripturarum auctoritate confirmes, sed ex ipsis scripturis sensum capere veritatis. Et ideo oportet ab eo intelligentiam discere Scripturarum qui eam a majoribus, secundum veritatem sibi traditam, servat, ut et ipse posset ea, quæ recte suscepit, competenter adserere.' Lib. x. c. 42. The principle is clearly stated, Tertull. de Præscript. xxii. et xxvii.

† This is expressly stated by Vincentius Lirinensis:—'Quibus tamen cunctis satis evidenter perspicueque monstratur, hoc apud omnes fere hæreses quasi solemne esse ac legitimum, ut semper prophanis novitatibus gaudeant, antiquitatis scita fastidiant, et per oppositiones falsi nominis scientiæ a fide naufragent. Contra vero, Catholicorum hoc fere proprium, deposita sanctorum Patrum et commissa servare, damnare prophanas novitates, et sicut dixit et iterum dixit Apostolus: *Si quis annunciaverit, præterquam quod acceptum est, anathemare*,' cap. xxxiv. It is not improbable that the title of *catholic* was applied to the orthodox from the principle of the orthodox in thus seeking always to ascertain the *universal* tradition before coming to a decision on any doctrinal question.

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to be universally held was rejected or unknown. But the contrary fact, the fact that the Scriptures were interpreted in a uniform sense, that in all the apostolical churches in all the different parts of the world a harmony of doctrine existed, is expressly affirmed by Irenæus,* by Tertullian,† by Hegesippus,‡ by Clemens Alexandrinus,§ and by Origen.‖ Nay, more,—we find the whole discipline of the church organized for the very purpose of ascertaining and preserving the 'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.'

In the primitive ages bishops were regarded not in the light of independent governors of their respective churches, but as members of the one great episcopal college which had been incorporated by Christ, and to which the individual members were amenable.¶ As each bishop was regarded as the principle of unity in his own church, so was the college of bishops regarded as the principle of unity in the church universal. And in order to preserve this unity, a constant intercourse and correspondence was kept up between the bishops

* Lib. i. c. 10. alias 3. Lib. iii. c. 3.

† Præscript. xx. xxviii.

‡ Apud Euseb. lib. iv. c. 22.

§ Strom. vii. p. 898, 899. Conf. Strom. i. p. 322. See Waterland on Ecclesiastical Antiquity, chap. vii.

‖ The statement in Origen is so important that I insert it here:—Cum multi sint qui se putant scire quæ Christi sunt, et nonnulli eorum diversa prioribus sentiant, servetur, vero ecclesiastica prædicatio per successionis ordinem ab Apostolis tradita, *et usque ad præsens in Ecclesiis* (the third century) *permanens:* illa sola credenda est veritas quæ in nullo ab ecclesiastica traditione discordat. Origen in Apolog. Pamph. inter opp. Hieron. tom. v. p. 223.

¶ St. Cyprian, Ep. 55 and 68. See the same Father for the subsequent statements, Ep. 59. 45. 25. 29. 63.

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and the different churches: the very first act, indeed, of a bishop was to send communicatory letters to the neighbouring bishops to assure them both of his fraternal disposition and the orthodoxy of his creed. And so necessary were these encyclical letters esteemed, that, according to Liberatus, the omission to send one implied either a charge of heresy against the prelates neglected, or the existence of heresy in the party refusing to write.*

But here it may be asked, how it could be possible for all the bishops of all the churches to be thus in communication, Irenæus informing us that even in his time there were churches in Germany, in Spain, in France, as well as in the East, in Egypt, in Africa, and in the middle of the world, in which one and the same tradition was preserved.† To this difficulty an answer can be readily given by referring again to the admirable discipline of the early ages. The bishops to whom these letters were addressed were those of the same province, or those who acted under the same primus or metropolitan,—the metropolitan corresponded with the patriarch, and the patriarchs with one another. So that by these means the whole Christian world was

* Bingham, xvi. ci. § 8. By the 19th canon of the Council of Antioch it would seem that, at the consecration of a bishop, all, or at least the majority, of the bishops of the province ought to attend. It is with reference to this view of the subject, if I may hazard a conjecture, that we may attribute the canon which requires that the consecrators of a bishop shall not, except in cases of necessity, be fewer in number than three; *tres faciunt collegium* being a maxim of Roman law, so important a rite was not to be administered but by the consent of the episcopal college.

† Routh, Opuscula, p. 690.

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regarded, as the primitive Christians loved to express it, as one episcopate. 'There is,' says St. Cyprian,* 'one episcopate whereof diverse bishops spread over the face of the whole world, and acting together with one harmonious concert are severally partakers.' So much for the admirable machinery by which the whole Church could be preserved in unity.

And now let us see how it was employed. The custom of the Church enforced by the canons (even the very earliest canons we possess) was that provincial synods should be held twice every year;† and the result of these conferences was conveyed by means of this kind of correspondence from one part of the world to another; so that it would have been immediately known if any one church had departed from the original faith. We have instances of this kind of correspondence in the case of the lapsed, when the same conclusion as to their treatment was arrived at, in the third century, by all the churches, as easily as if a general council had been held.‡ Eusebius mentions the existence in his day of an epistle from the Church of Palestine, another from the Church of Rome, another from the bishops of Pontus, another from the Church of Gaul,§ and many others, for the purpose of ascertaining the traditional practice with respect to the observation of Easter. The bishops of Palestine

* Ep. 55.

† Ante-Nicene Code, canon 38. Nicene Council, canon 5. Antioch, canon 20. Constantinople, canon 6. Chalcedon, canon 19.

‡ St. Cyprian, Ep. 55.

§ Lib. v. cap. 23 ad cap. 28.

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having, as Eusebius says,* treated at large concerning the tradition that had come down to them in regular succession from the Apostles, conclude their epistle with the following direction: 'Make it your business to send copies of this our letter throughout the whole church;' adding, that they had already received letters on the same subject from Alexandria.† In like manner, the bishops who assembled to condemn the heresies of Paul of Samosata immediately despatched an epistle to all the provinces to notify what had been done;‡ an epistle addressed to all their fellow-ministers all over the world, bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and to the whole Catholic Church under heaven, and mentioning by name the metropolitans by whom the letter was to be circulated, and in this letter the heresies of Paul are censured as novelties, that is, as contrary to the received and transmitted or traditional doctrine of the Church. With respect to the circular letters generally, the greatest possible care was taken against imposition or forgery; for not only were they signed by the presiding bishop, but the messenger who conveyed them was one of the most trustworthy of his clergy. They were indeed called *literæ formatæ*, because they were written in a peculiar form, with some peculiar marks

* Cap. 25.

† The fact appears to be, that nothing had been delivered upon the subject;—there was no universal tradition, though there was a general practice; and therefore, when the question was settled at the Council of Nice, the Fathers used the form ἔδοξε πάντας πείθεσθαι, it seemed good to us that all should obey, or observe, that time, which they had defined.

‡ Euseb. vii. 30.

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or characters, which served as signatures to distinguish them from counterfeits.* The bishop receiving such a letter was obliged to communicate it to his brethren;† thus we find St. Cyprian transmitting letters relating to the lapsed to Caldonius with the avowed object that one course, one resolution, might be observed by the whole college of bishops, while his own letters were despatched to all quarters of the world. Optatus‡ is thus justified in his remark that the whole world was united in one common society or communion, by the mutual intercourse of these canonical letters.

Now such being the discipline of the ancient church, was it probable that the traditional doctrine would be materially corrupted? On the contrary, it was almost impossible, the rule being with all these corresponding churches, as Vincentius Lirinensis tells us, to keep that delivered to their trust, and to innovate in nothing, and that only being regarded as authoritative, in the assertion of which all the independent churches of the world agreed. The interpretation of Scripture in all catholic churches being on all important points uniform, well may Tertullian ask,§ 'Is it possible to suppose that so many and such great churches

* Bingham, ii. 4. § 5. and St. Cyprian, Ep. 29.

† St. Cyprian, Ep. 25.

‡ Lib. ii. p. 48.

§ De Præscript. Hær. cap. xxviii. Ecquid verisimile est, ut tot ac tantæ in unam fidem *erraverint?* Nullus inter multos eventus unus est exitus; variasse debuerant ordinem (*for*, nullis inter multos eventus unus est exitus; variasse debuerant ordine) doctrinæ ecclesiarum. Cæterum quod apud multos unum invenitur, non est erratum, sed traditum.

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should have blundered into one and the same faith?' No; the fact, that in so many churches one and the same doctrine and discipline prevailed, is a proof that what they held was not held by mere chance, but received by tradition. And when, afterwards, general councils were convoked, the object in those councils was not to deduce new doctrines from Scripture, but simply to ascertain the universal tradition as to disputed points. The fathers of the Nicene Council were very careful to declare that the form of faith they promulgated was not an invention or deduction of their own, but the very same which they had received when they were first instructed in the principles of religion.* And the Novatian Bishop Acesius himself admitted to Constantine, that it was no new thing that was then decided on, but that the council had decided according to tradition.† And this was probably the reason why, at the commencement of the session, when the logicians began to discuss and dispute, they were immediately put to silence;—the fathers had come not to debate about the faith, but to bear testimony.‡ The fact is

* Soc. lib. i. c. 8.

† Soc. i. 10.

‡ 'The orthodox, and especially those great saints, who knew by experience that God reveals to the meek and humble what He hides from the proud, desired to keep entirely to what had been already received by tradition, without endeavouring to give new turns to the words of Scripture, in order to interpret it in a different manner from what their forefathers had learned from the Apostles. But the Arians, who could not find in it that which they maintained, presumed, on the contrary, that they ought not to stand to that which had been held by the primitive Christians, because they were not certain of it, and therefore they desired that the truth of their doctrine might be sought from Scripture alone, which they could

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clearly stated by Eusebius, in a letter which he wrote to his diocese on the occasion:—'As we have received by tradition from our predecessors the bishops, then when we were instructed in the first principles of the faith, and received baptism, as we have learned from the sacred Scriptures, so also we do now believe and do make a public declaration of our faith.'* The very contest about the word *homo-ousion* may be traced to the misapplication of this principle. It was thought by some to be a new word, although it was used to express the fact universally acknowledged.

It were easy to show that the same principle prevailed in the other three general councils which are received by the Church of England; but, in order to avoid prolixity, I shall refer particularly only to the last, that of Chalcedon. The object of this synod, as declared by itself, was to vindicate the doctrine which from the beginning had continued unshaken;† it was convoked for the express purpose of preventing the introduction of novelties; the members solemnly disclaimed any wish of adding to the faith,‡ and they as solemnly professed to follow the steps of the fathers.§

wrest to their own sense by their false subtleties.' *Maimbourg, Hist. Arian.*, Webster's Translation. He refers to Ruff. Sozom. lib. i. cap. 18, Niceph. lib. viii.

* Soc. i. 8.

† Evagrius Scholasticus, lib. ii. cap. 4. The *Definitio Fidei apud concilium Chalcedonium* may be found in the *Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum opuscula præcipua quædam*, by Dr. Routh. See note 21.

‡ See Canon xxviii.

§ Πάντες οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι ἐβόησαν· Δικαία ἡ κρίσις τῶν πατέρων. Canones Chalcedonensis concilii univ. p. 419.

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I do not intend to say that there was nothing discussed at these councils, for there were many points open to discussion, namely, all that related to the regulation of the different churches;—I only contend that such was not the case when articles of faith were under consideration. It is most important to make this distinction, and nothing can more strongly prove the distinction than the difference in the form of words used when any canon pertaining merely to a rite or ceremony, or to a case of discipline was ordained, from that adopted when assent was given to an article of faith; in the former case, the form was, ἔδοξε τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα, (these things seem good to us,) in the latter, οὕτως πιστεύει ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία (so the catholic church believes); not presuming to act on their own judgment, but simply declaring the fact of tradition.*

Indeed the proceedings which took place before a general council assembled are sufficient to show that the members attended, (so far as the faith was concerned,) not as representatives to debate, but as delegates commissioned to bear witness. No sooner were the patriarchs apprised of the matter about to come before the general council than they gave notice to the metropolitans, by whom provincial synods were imme-

* Athanasius, De Syn. quoted by Hammond in his Parœnesis, p. 558. Hammond continues, 'To which purpose also was, I suppose, the second versicle in the doxology, (the orthodoxal form of acknowledging the Trinity,) *As it was in the beginning*, as it stood by original tradition apostolical, is now and ever shall be world without end. No new doctrine ever to be brought into the church by whatsoever council, but only that which the Apostles had delivered.'

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diately convoked. These provincial synods consisted of the metropolitan and his suffragans, attended by their presbyters; and here the business coming on at the general council was duly considered, and then by common consent certain principal bishops were appointed to convey to the general council the sentiments of the provincial one.* Thus we find John of Antioch sending an apology to the third general council for his non-attendance on the appointed day, because he had not had time to collect the bishops of his province, some of whom were distant a twelve days' journey.† That the patriarchs themselves, whatever powers they may afterwards have usurped, attended not as independent authorities, but to bear testimony to the tradition preserved in their patriarchates, is clear from this, that although, in the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, Nestorius and Dioscorus refused to attend, yet the council proceeded to condemn the heretical patriarchs, because, the metropolitans being present, the patriarchates were represented. No council was considered general until all the patriarchates were represented; thus the council of Ephesus was not accounted a general one until the arrival of John of Antioch.‡ So that the decree of a general council was received, not because a general council was thought to be infallible, but because what was there promulgated, if not contradicted, was regarded as the tradition of the universal church. And it is by bearing this in mind,

* Field on the Church, book v. chap. 49.
† Evagrius Scholasticus, lib. i. c. 3.
‡ See Field, p. 648.

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that we can vindicate the Church of this country from an apparent inconsistency, when on the one hand she refers to the four first general councils as an authority, and on the other hand states, in the twenty-first article, that general councils may err and have erred. A general council, as such, is to us of no authority, except so far as our bishops see fit to accord with its appointments; the four first general councils are referred to, not because they were general councils, but because they were what one of the fathers calls them, —conservatories of tradition. They asserted the tradition of the Catholic Church, the 'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;' and these articles of faith, thus traditionally preserved and handed down by the Church, being such as can be proved by Scripture, we hold them to be precisely what God has revealed.

We have thus seen on what strong grounds that authority rests to which the Church of England appeals when the meaning of Scripture is controverted; and to the writings of our eminent and learned divines in the different branches of theology we may triumphantly refer, as affording to the ordinary reader a digest of that primitive tradition which we have seen the ancients thus carefully and piously preserve. To guard against misrepresentation or misunderstanding, I must allude once again to what I hinted at before, the difference between our position and that of the Church of Rome, with regard to this doctrine. The modern Church of Rome receives as tradition what she cannot prove to be really such, and regards it as independent of Scripture. The primitive Church was most careful to receive

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as tradition only what was universally received as such, and then used it merely as elucidatory of Scripture,* not as the light, but as a lanthorn to guard the light; or if as the light, merely as a beam to illumine the page which might otherwise be illegible. And such are the principles of the Catholic Church of England. And let such be the principles of all her true and faithful and loyal children and subjects. In forming our analogy of faith, let us, when duly prepared by prayer, compare Scripture with Scripture; let us attend to the criticism of the Bible; let us attend to its grammatical interpretation; but let us place all under the supervision and correction of Catholic tradition. Situated as we are, with the rationalist on the one hand and the papist on the other, both parties vigorously cheered on by the professors of a liberality which amounts to indifference if not to hostility, with the sea before us and the armies of Egypt behind us, let us stand in the way and see and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and seek rest unto our souls by walking therein. Let us think deeply, for without deep thought as well as fervent prayer, who can catch even a glimpse of the sublimities of the Gospel? Who can understand the mercies of redeeming love and sanctifying grace? Who can worship the holy and undivided Trinity with the understanding and the spirit? But if peradventure we find that our soaring thoughts have led us, at any time, to conclusions at

* Tertullian, who strongly insisted upon the line of argument adopted in this discourse, was almost fanatical in his reverence for Scripture. See Bp. Kaye, p. 290.

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variance with what was held as scriptural in the primitive church, let us at least have the modesty to suppose that there is a possibility, yea that there is a probability of our being in error; and commencing our enquiries anew, let our object be not self-vindication, but to discover wherein the flaw in our reasoning consists; for, to conclude in the words of a divine, of whose learning, judgment, and caution there can be but one opinion: 'If what appears probably to be taught in Scripture, appears certainly to have been taught in the primitive and catholic church, such probability, so strengthened, carries with it the force of demonstration.' *

* Waterland, Pref. to Moyer's Lecture.

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SERMON XII.*

'I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE.'

Romans xi. 13.

If we study the biography of a true poet, and enter into the recesses of his mind, we soon discover that poetry was, in his estimation, the most sublime of all the pursuits of man, and, marvelling at his own productions, that he regarded them as in some measure the results of inspiration: he magnified his office, and unless he had done so he would have been a mere versifier, an accomplished man of literature but no poet.

When we enter the studio of a distinguished artist, we find him surrounded by the portraits of artists eminent in their day, and when he refers to their history and points to the princes and peers whom by sculpture or painting they have immortalized, and who, except for the artists whom they once proudly patronized, would have been long since forgotten, we perceive that the artist is conscious of the dignity of his calling, that he regards himself as the superior of those to whom he must now yield precedence, and that he magnifies his office. Unless he does so, and devotes

* [Preached in the Cathedral Church of Ripon, at the General Ordination, September 19, 1847.]

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all the energies of his mind to the study of his art, though he may by his talent procure a present livelihood, his will never be an immortality of fame.

When we converse with musicians, they so magnify their office in their own minds, that they confound with intellect itself a just appreciation of musical sounds, and suppose that to the art of the performer and the science of music, all other arts and sciences must be rendered subservient.

It is indeed a part of man's nature to magnify to himself the importance of any pursuit in which he is engaged, and until he does so, he will neither devote to it the energies of his mind, nor labour with success. When we see ecclesiastics, though pledged to lay aside all other studies except those which bear upon the study of theology, dedicating all their mental powers to the fascinating pursuits of literature or science; when we see others affecting a secularity of dress and deportment, hurried first into the follies of life, and through them involved in more grave offences of commission as well as omission, we may trace the lamentable fact not only to the existence of an unconverted heart, but to that other fact, that they have never viewed in a proper light the awful importance of those duties which, through their ordination, have devolved upon them. And therefore I conceive that, when called upon by our Spiritual Father to address those whom he is about to admit into the sacred ministry, I cannot select a more appropriate text than those few words which I have read to you, or address you with more probability of profit to your souls, than by entreating you now and

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at all periods of life, to reflect with seriousness, and deliberation, upon the magnitude, in its functions and in its responsibilities, of that office which is about to be imposed upon you by the laying on of hands.

To dispense improvement and happiness through the social and domestic circles of a neighbourhood; to administer consolation in the house of mourning, to supply spiritual succour and comfort in the chamber of the sick, to enforce the truths of eternity at the bed of the dying; to lead the divine worship in the services of God's house; to preach the truths of the everlasting Gospel from the pulpit; to admit the elect into the church at Baptism; to prepare the baptized for the laying on of hands in Confirmation; to commemorate, at the Lord's Table, the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction made upon the cross by God Incarnate, and to offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; to act as watchmen on the Lord's watch tower, and to watch for immortal souls; as shepherds under the Divine Pastor, to lead his sheep to the green pastures and the living waters, to seek the lost, to guide those that stray, to carry the weary, to cherish the wounded, and to feed the lambs, for whom He shed His own most precious blood; to act, not as ministers of an earthly sovereign, an honour to which the ambitious aspire, but even as ambassadors of the King of kings, sent with tidings of mercy to a rebellious world; as stewards of the mysteries of God, servants in the household of the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, commissioned by Him to administer the grace of His Sacraments to His spiritual children, and to bear the

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bread and water of life to hungry and thirsty souls, whom He invites to His heavenly Banquet: yea, to act as the fellow helpers of Omnipotence in translating men from the bondage of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, since under the present dispensation, the Almighty Lord God sets limits, as it were, to His own omnipotence, and employs the agency of man; surely, my brethren, these are functions, and this an office, of the magnitude and importance of which it is impossible to speak in terms of exaggeration. In worldly avocations, a man may sometimes expose himself to the ridicule of his associates by a disproportionate magnification of his own pursuit; but this cannot be the case with us, for no calling can approach in importance to that which relates to the salvation and edification of immortal souls; nay, properly and sufficiently to magnify the importance of the ministerial office, in promoting the glory of God the Blessed Trinity, would exhaust the eloquence of an archangel's tongue.

But observe, my brethren, what is here asserted and maintained is this, that our office is to be magnified; a very different and entirely distinct thing from the magnifying of self through the office—of confounding which two different and distinct things many a self-deceiver is guilty; and against this we all require to be continually warned. Too many there are, who in the sacred ministry, seem scarcely able to make the distinction between what is an important duty, and what is always a folly and often a sin; who desire to promote what they should endeavour to avoid, deference to

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themselves personally, and who seek their own glory, while they speak of the glory of God.

Very different was the conduct of St. Paul. 'I magnify mine office,' said the Apostle to the Gentiles, when writing to the Romans, but why? Not for his own sake, not to conciliate respect or esteem to himself, not to obtain authority and power for the indulgence of human pride: 'I am the least of the Apostles,' he was wont to say in speaking of himself, 'that am not meet to be called an Apostle,' 'less than the least of all saints:'* but 'I magnify mine office,' he says, 'if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.' The advantage of others was his sole object, and whenever we magnify our office, let us remember that it is not to be for self-exaltation, but in order that we may discharge properly those duties to which we are appointed for the promotion of God's glory, through the salvation and edification of souls. When we really magnify our office, we shall, like St. Paul, humiliate self, and in self-humiliation the real education of the soul consists.

The distinction to which I have alluded, though hidden from the self-deceiver, is easily made and applied by the looker on. We may hear the dignified ecclesiastic, advanced in years, with pompous deportment, contending for precedence in society, and declaiming on what he calls the dignity of the cloth; or we may see the young ecclesiastic, affecting a peculia-

* 1 Cor. xv. 9. Eph. iii. 8.

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rity of dress, demeanour, and phraseology, and by his singularity of appearance attracting attention to himself; and we at once perceive that self, not the good of others, is in their thoughts—that, though they seem to magnify their office, the real object is, through the office, to magnify self.

But although this be the case, yet it is only by magnifying their office that young ecclesiastics will preserve a proper decorum and consistency of conduct in their general intercourse with society. We sometimes hear discussions upon minute points of clerical propriety, and enquiry is made whether this or that pursuit or amusement is to be regarded as clerical. But it is not by discussion of these details, it is by taking the general principle, by properly magnifying our office, that we shall be able to regulate our conduct as circumstances, from time to time, may arise. If we mistake our position in society we fall into absurdities, whereas, by knowing precisely what it is, we have a rule which can seldom be misapplied. It is sometimes asked why certain occupations and amusements which all admit to be lawful to the laity, are prohibited to the clergy, and it is asserted that what is allowable to one class of Christians must be allowable to all who name the name of Christ. But there is a fallacy here, for we are never to forget that many things are lawful, which are nevertheless inexpedient to certain persons under certain circumstances. For example, who would think of blaming our children for being amused with their playthings? And yet we should be severe in our censures upon that person who, having arrived at man's estate,

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should refuse to put away childish things. Precisely so, there are modes of conduct and various kinds of recreation, in which there is nothing intrinsically wrong, and which are therefore allowable to those who have advanced from childhood to youth; but in which older men could not indulge without depriving themselves of respect which they might otherwise challenge, and of the reverence which is ever due to their grey hairs. But when a young man is ordained to the priesthood, he ceases, in the eye of the Church, to be ranked among the young men, and takes his place among the elders of Israel;—he is called a presbyter or an elder, on this account. Whatsoever, then, would be unbecoming in a Christian advanced in years, is, on this account, unbecoming in a presbyter or elder of the Church, and the actions which would deprive grey hairs of their reverence are to be carefully avoided by those to whom, though young in years, the designation of reverend is accorded. If it were possible, those only would have been admitted into the sacred ministry, who had grown old in the service of the Lord, and who, by reference to their own spiritual experience, would have been able to form a right judgment in all things, and to bear rule wisely in the sanctuary. But since that could not be, and because moreover by study, meditation, and prayer, through the grace of God, younger men may obtain what may correspond to the experience, which gives weight and authority to old age, young men have, from apostolic times, been received into holy orders. Let those who are so admitted into the sacred ministry magnify their office as presby-

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ters, let them take their place among reverend and aged Christians, and never forget that they have been selected from their brethren of the same age as themselves, because they are presented to the Bishop as being 'sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.'

When we pass from the consideration of our general conduct in society to our demeanour in the sanctuary, it becomes still more important that we should magnify our office to our own minds. But here again I must allude to the distinction to which I have already called your attention. When a man, in conducting the services of the sanctuary, and in leading the devotions of the people, is in any way affected; if he reads in a pompous mouthing manner; or if, which is quite as offensive, he is affectedly simple; if he assumes a solemnity of tone which does not appear to be the natural expression of real feeling; if he seems to be thinking of the impression likely to be made on the assembled congregation by his fine reading, or on the other hand by his hurried enunciation, adopted as an indirect testimony against the opposite extreme—the suspicion in the mind of the looker on is, that this man is magnifying not his office but himself, that he is seeking not God's glory but his own. It is by really magnifying our office that carelessness, irreverence, and affectation are to be avoided. Let us never forget the dignity of the office with which we are invested, when, acting as the mouthpiece of our people, we lead their devotions, and present their offerings unto the Lord. How overpowering are our feelings, what thrilling emotions stir the heart, when we

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contemplate ourselves, in the benedictions and the absolutions, as acting in the character of ambassadors from Jehovah, to speak peace in His name to His penitent people; or when we contemplate ourselves as stewards of the mysteries of God, dispensing His grace through His sacraments. It is from a realization of these details of faith, that solemnity of thought and feeling result, giving a sufficient solemnity of manner, as much as is accordant with our natural temperament: and whatever is contrary to our natural temperament is mere acting.

When we thus magnify our office, we humiliate self, for when our thoughts advert to self, what are we even in the discharge of these most solemn functions? All the good is done by the Lord God Himself, we are but as machines through whom the Holy Spirit operates; of no more value in the work than the water which is in the font, or the bread and wine upon the holy table, which, though used as the channels through which God conveys certain kinds of grace to souls in which no impediment to such grace exists, are in themselves nothing; in our ministrations we are, at best, but as the sunbeams which God employs to bear to earth His heat, or as the rains and dews which carry His fertilizing blessing. It is in weakness and fear and much trembling, that we must be among our people, never forgetting that he who opens a gate to others may not be permitted to pass through it himself, yea, that he who has preached to others may himself be a castaway.

And this brings me to offer a few remarks on our

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office as preachers. Here again, when the office of a preacher is extolled by one who evidently seeks, by the delivery of fine sentiments in fine language, to raise adulation of himself, who, by polished periods and the flourishes of rhetoric, profanes the pulpit, by making it a theatre of display or the rostrum in which he may obtain for himself the fame of an orator, we feel, that while he magnifies his office, it is only because with that office he is himself connected, and that he is puffed up in his fleshly mind, because by that mind his office is not magnified properly. But still we must be on our guard against falling into the opposite extreme, and of following one truth to the exclusion of another. Wrong it certainly is, so to magnify the ordinance of preaching as to cause it to supersede in the estimation of men the sacraments of the Gospel; and yet in maintaining the dignity of the sacraments and other ordinances of the sanctuary, there may be sometimes detected an indirect mode of magnifying self, since a man may depreciate the ordinance of preaching from a consciousness of his own incapacity for the office of a preacher. But he who magnifies his office properly, and looks to God, not himself, believes that there is in preaching a kind of sacramental efficacy which ought not to be overlooked. Even as God the Holy Ghost, the real Minister in the Church of Christ, employs water and the word in the regeneration, and bread and wine in the strengthening and refreshing of souls, so does He employ the voice of man for the conversion of sinners and for the edification of the faithful. The voice of a sinful man is heard, but using the human voice, it is God the Holy Ghost Who speaks to the heart prepared to hear.

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My brethren of the ministry, it is when we thus regard ourselves as outward and visible instruments in the hands of God, through whom the conversion of sinners is ordinarily effected by God the Holy Ghost, that we become duly impressed with the solemn and sacred character of the preacher's office; and in this faith it is not on our talents that we are to rely, for the work of conversion is the work, not of man but of God, Who sometimes converts the sinner's heart through the strong appeal of those who are animated in their address and powerful in their language; and at other times, through the grave remonstrances, or the earnest reasonings of others, who are not quickly moved or easily excited; 'not by might of words, not by power of eloquence, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.'* Only, my brethren, let us constantly have in mind, that this is to be with us an object, and as you advance in the ministry you will be astonished to find, through conversation with penitents, how words and sayings, so little intended to have any particular effect as to have been forgotten by yourself, have, through the Spirit, done their work on a sinner's heart: and oh! may the converting Spirit ever be with us, whispering to our own souls while we preach to others,—'Physician, heal thyself.'

But preachers only magnify their office partially when they think merely of conversion, and indolently confine their addresses to an appeal to the feelings: the preacher is also appointed to be the instructor of God's people, to edify the faithful by building them

* Zechariah iv. 6.

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up in sound doctrine. The mind is to be employed as well as the soul sanctified, in the service of God, to Whom the whole man, spirit, soul, and body, is to be devoted. Hence no doubt, in order that it may give employment to all classes of mind, there are permitted to be difficulties in Scripture, depths for the giant to wade, as well as shallows which an infant may ford: in the study of Scripture, a Newton as well as a peasant will find enough to call into play all the powers of his intellect; for in studying the Word of God he is conversing with the Infinite. The laity, engaged in their various avocations, are seldom able to make theology their exclusive study, but the clergy are endowed, that to this one subject they may address all the energies of the mind, and they are under a vow that, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh, they will be 'diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same.' It is our business, our duty, our especial calling, to give ourselves constantly to these studies, and to lay the result of them before those who have less time for the investigation; remembering that, as we profess to be teachers in the Church, we act dishonestly if we place before our hearers our own crude conjectures on points upon which the Church has decided, or upon doctrines defined by her. The laity of the Church have a right to demand of their preachers that they should state to them distinctly what the Church asserts, and prove to them from Scripture that what the Church asserts is scriptural. If we suppose, (but it can only be by the supposition of ignorance,)

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that the doctrinal positions of the Church of England are unscriptural, it were dishonest in us to teach other doctrine in her pulpits: we ought rather to cease from teaching at all, or to quit her communion.

In this department of a preacher's office we are appointed to make plain the truths which we have realized to our own minds, to minds less acquainted with the depths of theology; to reduce the folios of the learned to the shape which may more easily be grasped by the busy; to take precious stones from the quarry, and to polish them, so that their value may be apparent to the passer by; to act like Joseph, who gathered all the wheat into his storehouse, in order to deal it out to the people, in retail, as their exigencies demanded; to draw water from the deep wells, and to distribute it cup by cup to the people thirsting for the waters of life; to go as the parent bird to the full corn field, and thence to bring grain after grain to the little ones in the nest, in such proportions as can be by them digested.

Thus, my brethren, are we pledged to be students through life; to be ever learning, that we may always be more apt to teach; ever taking in that we may give out; ever keeping our own minds awake, that the minds of our people may not be in a lethargy. It is impossible to give to others what we do not possess ourselves, or to instruct others in theology, if we are not ourselves theologians. We cannot give out water from an empty bucket.* It is lamentable, indeed, to

* We live at a period when Christianity is, if we may say so, in fashion among the respectable classes of society, when the Gibbons of the age go to church, call themselves Christians, and

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find some of the clergy remaining, all their lives, contented with the elementary information which their Bishop requires as the minimum of theology before he will admit them into the ministry; and it is still more lamentable to find them supposing that they know the whole counsel of God, when they have mastered a few of what they think to be the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, forgetting that fundamental doctrines are not correctly stated when placed before us in an isolated form; they are to be understood in their relation to other revealed truths, and we are expressly directed to 'prophesy according to the proportion of faith.'* It has been well said that 'there are many persons who err so much the more dangerously because they take a truth as the principle of their error. Their

speak favourably, not only of the morality, but of the sentiments of Christianity. They are only opposed to its doctrines, the dogmas of the Church; an allusion to some of the doctrines is tolerated, because these doctrines are conventionally explained away, and are the form under which religious sentiment is recommended; but any thing like an allusion to the mysterious truths of our faith is regarded with suspicion, and an outcry is raised against those who assert them as a reality, instead of using them as a kind of literary ornament. It has on this ground been recommended to preachers to avoid the study of theology, and to confine themselves to moral or sentimental preaching, such as even Socinians of liberal mind could tolerate. But the wisdom of such advice savours of mere worldly prudence. Whatever God in His wisdom has revealed, that ought the preacher of the word to know and to expound, or he makes man wiser than God. At the present time the theologian is attacked by those who are ignorant of theology, and denounced for asserting novelties, when he only propounds what all theologians hold. To promote peace without the sacrifice of truth, it is desirable that the study of theology, instead of being restricted, should be enlarged.

* Rom. xii. 6.

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fault is not that they follow a falsehood, but that they follow one truth to the exclusion of another. There are a number of truths, both doctrinal and moral, which appear repugnant and contrary, but which nevertheless subsist in an admirable order. The source of all heresies is the exclusion of some of these truths. Hence it appears that the shortest way to prevent heresies is to instruct in all the truths of religion, and the shortest way of refuting heresies is to declare all these truths.'*

There is one general rule to be laid down with respect to sermons, the observance of which will save the preacher much unnecessary care and trouble; namely, to think only of the exigencies of the people whom he addresses, without any regard to his own character as a man either of literature or of eloquence. The position of our mind in preparing a sermon ought to be, not that of a literary man making a composition, but rather that of a friend writing to a friend because he has something to say, and not, as in a formal letter, because he must say something. Our sermon should be regarded as an hebdomadal letter to our flock; and a good sermon is not that which a critic would pronounce to be such, but that which is best adapted in matter and in style to the capacities of the congregation we address. The theologian full of matter, and acquainted with his congregation, being regardless of his style and thinking only of expressing himself plainly, finds no difficulty in this part of his duty, for

* Pascal.

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out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Neither will he who looks to the good of his flock refuse, after the lapse of some time, to repeat his sermons; he will rather feel that by taking an old sermon, and by adding to it the illustrations and elucidations with which longer study has provided him, he will, by his revised sermon, indicate both his own advancement and that of his people, while at the end of his life, in sermons thus frequently revised, he may leave a legacy to the Church at large.

When we magnify our office as the converters of the sinful and the edifiers of the faithful, and look with a single eye to their advantage and not to our own literary character, we may be sure that we shall have in all we do the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and our labour will be comparatively light.

And now let us apply this principle, 'I magnify mine office,' to our parochial duties.

It is very true, that when we see the parish priest assuming a dictatorial tone, refusing the assistance and advice of the more experienced of his parishioners, and jealously watching all the prerogatives of his office, we are apt to suspect him of the fault to which we have alluded, and to suppose that it is self which he seeks to exalt, while it is his office which in words he magnifies: but at the same time we must perceive that unless those who are placed in the less important cures magnify their office very highly, they will either become indolent, or if their minds be energetic, they will be eagerly looking out for some more extensive sphere of operation. He on the contrary who magnifies his office, feels that

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wherever he is placed he has to watch for immortal souls, to win men to Christ, and to carry on a warfare with Satan and his angels, with wicked men and wicked spirits; and he also bears it in mind, that from the day of our ordination, our whole time, to the hour of our death, is to be devoted to God's service; relaxation and recreation being only allowable in order that we may renew our physical strength, or reinvigorate our minds, so that we may gird ourselves the more vigorously for what we have to do. When the parish is unusually small, still our time belongs to God, and what is not absolutely required for the visitation of the sick, for admonishing the wayward, for comforting the sorrowful, for superintending the school, and for study and prayer, should be placed at the disposal of the Bishop, to assist him in the conduct of Diocesan institutions established for the promotion of true religion and virtue. The layman gives his wealth, the ecclesiastic his time, to the promotion of God's glory, and before we venture to declaim against our brethren of the laity for not contributing large sums to parochial purposes, we ought to be sure that to those purposes we devote our time exclusively or sufficiently.

What is an incentive to action with regard to those who are placed in smaller cures, affords consolation to such as are called to more extensive spheres of action. Not less than all their time is required of the former, not more than all their time can be given by the latter: and when, having given all our time to our work, we find, as in large parishes we must do, that much is left undone, which ought to have been done, but which it

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was impossible to do, we may then rest satisfied with the conviction, that our necessary deficiencies will have been in some way or other supplied by Him, Who though He employs human agency, does not stand in need of man's help to accomplish what He wills to be done. All that in large parishes we can do, is to be always ready for action: to commit our parish, each day as it comes, to the special protection of God, beseeching Him to direct our steps to the persons and places to whom and in which we can minister in any way to the promotion of His glory; and then each summons to the bed of sickness, or to the house of mourning, or to spiritual conference with a penitent, must be regarded as a special call, to obey which we must be prepared to forego personal ease, domestic enjoyment, and social intercourse.

There is one great error into which persons so situated are apt to fall, and that is, an undue appreciation of their own usefulness, which leads to a forgetfulness of the fact, that all, howsoever employed, are only instruments in God's hands, and that it is not always by those who are ostensibly employed that God's work is best done. The question to be asked is, not how can I make myself most useful? but, what is my duty under given circumstances? When men look to their usefulness they are inclined to be discontented, and to become anxious, as the phrase is, to extend their sphere of usefulness: they are sometimes afraid to do right lest wrong motives should be imputed to them, and their usefulness be thus destroyed; and the fear again of having their usefulness interfered with, makes them,

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when their characters are assailed, too vehement in their self-vindication. And after all, when we come calmly to consider the subject, what is the desire of extending one's sphere of usefulness but ambition under another name, veiled from the self-deceiver's sight, because ambition is a deadly sin? and when we are deterred from doing what is right for fear of the imputation of a wrong motive, or when we are over-vehement in self-vindication, may we not detect an undue regard, not to our office but to self? Does not this whole notion of our usefulness originate in a misconception?

> God doth not need
> Man's works or his own gifts; who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
> Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean, without rest;
> They also serve who only stand and wait.

Yes, when a king or a general goes forth upon a campaign, the officers and soldiers follow him, desirous certainly of being useful, but not intending to decide for themselves how they will be most usefully employed; they leave that to the wisdom and decision of their commander, who orders them to their respective posts as he thinks fit; which posts of duty they continue to occupy, not because they see the usefulness of it, but because such has been the order they have received. Some are commanded to engage actively with the enemy, others form a corps of reserve, to some the custody of the baggage is confided, others occupy some obscure post in the field, merely watching the

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enemy. Now these are not permitted to leave their post because they desire to extend their sphere of usefulness, neither are the others permitted to retire because they are weary; all remain either fighting or watching until the battle is won, and then, but not till then, the wisdom of the victorious general in his arrangements is fully perceived and duly appreciated.

Now we, my brethren, if we really believe in a particular providence; if we believe that the providence of God extends from the mightiest to the lowliest of things, from wielding the destinies of the universe to the clothing of the lily of the field, and to the protection even of the worm which crawls upon the dust; we must of course believe that it is not by chance, for there is no such thing as chance, but by divine appointment, that to each one of us is assigned that particular post in the armies of the living God which we find ourselves to be occupying at the present moment. There shall we contentedly abide, doing the work our hand findeth to do, be it much or little, whether it consist in disputing with learned infidels, or in instructing the illiterate and perverse, whether it be in active pursuits, or in diligent study, there we shall abide until by a combination of circumstances concurring with a movement of the Spirit within us, and indicating the divine will, we feel it to be clear that we have a call elsewhere. Instead of complaining of the adverse circumstances by which we are surrounded we shall patiently adapt ourselves to the circumstances provided for us by God, or rather we shall lend to circumstances a voice, and hear them say, 'Thus saith the Lord.' It may be that we

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cannot discover the use of being in any one particular spot more than another; it may be that we desire some other kind of employment; it may be that we see no fruit from our labour; it may be that to all appearance we have preached in vain; it may be that all our endeavours to promote the welfare spiritual and temporal of our people may have been frustrated; yet if, having been always ready to do our Master's work in the sphere of action appointed by Him, we shall after long years of patient watchfulness and care, appear in the next world with a proud heart humbled, and an insolent temper subdued, and there find that we have been an instrument in the hands of God for the conversion of but one poor sinner's soul, to rescue but one fellow-creature from the grasp of Satan, knowing the value of an immortal soul, we shall find ourselves amply repaid for all our long watching, and we shall remember with a holy accession of joy the words of the Holy Ghost, 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'*

It is one of the advantages of having daily service, when practicable, in our churches, that it is an incessant memento to us of the fact that the good we hope to see effected in our parishes is done by God, and that we are only instruments in His hands: that while we preach or teach in our schools, or visit the sick or attend to our other duties, He it is Who, through our instrumentality, which He uses but does not need, con-

* St. James v. 30.

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verts the souls of men. Besides praying as individuals, we have family prayers for blessings on the family in its corporate capacity; for a blessing on the diocese and the labours of the diocesan, the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise is daily offered in our cathedral churches, and so important is this considered by the Church, that actually certain of our brethren are set apart to give their time and attendance to this very thing; and feeling that, without the same blessing, the watchman waketh but in vain, and that it is but lost labour that we rise up early and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, we are directed, when practicable, which very often it is not, to have parochial services day by day; and though it may be that out of a busy population only two or three, and those aged, infirm, and incapacitated for other duties, can attend, we are to remember, that to pray earnestly is the same thing as to labour, and that therefore, those few, the maimed, the halt, the blind, when praying, 'Thy kingdom come,' are helping the good cause, though less perceptibly, yet as really, as the most busy and the most energetic labourer in the Lord's vineyard. They too are labourers, only in another part of the field. They man the walls while others are fighting in the plain.

And now finally, my brethren, let me observe that we shall never go far wrong, if while we magnify our office we magnify also our responsibilities, and never forget the solemn account we shall one day have to give before the tribunal of Christ our God.

This question is certainly perplexing when we come

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to enquire how far the ill conduct of one man can be prejudicial to the eternal welfare of another, and would be even more perplexing if we were not daily conversant with the fact of children involved in misery and crime through parental wickedness or neglect. But perplexing as it is, the difficulty is decreased when we reflect upon the omniscience of God. He knows what means of improvement, or of extricating himself from evil, have been placed in each man's way; He can therefore make the needful allowances, and will accept of less advancement in one person than in another; wherefore He commands us not to judge or to compare ourselves with others, but He requires us each to do our best, for He also knows when any persons have not made sufficient advancement under advantages conferred, and may see fit to remove from such, or to decrease, the means and opportunities they once possessed, or which are vouchsafed to others. He may on these grounds see fit to inflict a punishment upon a parish or district, by permitting the appointment of a wicked or a careless pastor. And well would it be for those of the laity complaining of the vice or the carelessness of him who is sent to minister among them, while bearing witness against him to their bishop, and adopting all lawful means for his removal, not to confine their reproaches to him, but to look also to themselves, and to ascertain by self-examination whether they, by not making use of other means of improvement within their reach, have not been cursed by a bad clergyman as a punishment. If they believe that all things are ordered in His Church by the providence

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of God, they will understand how He may punish by a bad pastor as well as bless by a good one; and let the individuals of a parish, by encouraging piety in themselves, and by the eloquence of a good example preaching piety to others, when the watchman is blind or ignorant, or as a dumb dog that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber,—let them by the rhetoric of a holy life reform their parish, and God in His good time will send them a good pastor as their reward.

But how awful is the thought that one ordained to be a blessing to God's people, may become only a rod of vengeance in the mighty hand and the outstretched arm of Jehovah; that wicked ministers in the Church may still be employed by God, but only in the sense in which Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar were employed, only as Satan was employed when he was permitted to torment Job, to try the patience of the faithful, or to be a curse to the wicked: 'O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.'*

What agonies will rend, what horrors will overwhelm the heart of the blind, the ignorant, the dumb, the sensual, the gluttonous, the slumbering or careless pastor, when on the great day of account he shall see before the thonre of Judgment some miserable sinner, and hear him say: 'There stands the watchman who was pledged to watch for my soul. I was wicked but he never warned me, I was a backslider but he never admonished me, I was ignorant but he never instructed me, I was a wanderer but he never tried to reclaim me:

* Habakkuk i. 12.

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nay rather in all my evil ways he by his own evil example confirmed me.'

It will be no consolation to such a one to hear the most just Judge say to his accuser: 'Thou wicked servant, it is true that thou hadst not the advantage of a good pastor; it is true that by the neglect of a wicked pastor many means of conversion and improvement were closed to thee, but there were other means by which thou mightest have been converted if thou hadst not hardened thine heart.' It will be no consolation to hear this asserted, when the Judge shall turn round to the wicked pastor and say, 'Son of man, whom I made a watchman to the house of Israel, although this wicked man shall die in his sins, yet because thou didst not warn him, his blood will I require at thine hand.'*

Alas! my brethren, when we magnify or place before ourselves, in their fulness, the responsibilities of those who are appointed watchmen to the spiritual Israel of God, the most faithful minister must feel inclined to despond and say, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Who, indeed! if we did not hear Jesus, our Almighty Saviour, saying unto us, 'Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world!' if we did not hear Jesus saying unto us, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness;' 'My grace is sufficient for you!' if we did not know and believe that when there is an honest intention, in a heart justified by faith, to do our appointed work, then, 'If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins.'†

* Ezekiel iii. 17, 18. † St. John ii. 1.

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To Christ,—Christ crucified, Christ glorified, Christ our atonement, Christ our intercessor, Christ sanctifying us by His Spirit, to Christ our all in all,—we call men by our preaching; to effect a union with Him, the only Mediator, we administer the Sacraments; through Him, our only Intercessor, we offer our prayers and praises to the throne of grace; and on Him, our own, our adorable Jesus, to Whose service we devote our lives, we, the ministers of His Word and Sacraments, may with grateful confidence rely, in all the doubts and distresses, the dangers and conflicts of our ministerial life. Let us go forth, then, in the strength of the Lord, and making mention of His righteousness only, may we do great things,—and when the great day shall have come, may we each of us be able to say with cheerful voice, strong in the grace of Christ, 'Lo, here am I, and the children which Thou hast given me;'* and may we hear our own Saviour say unto us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, take thy place among those who having turned many to righteousness are shining as the brightness of the firmament, even as the stars for ever and ever;'—for while we magnify our responsibilities, we may magnify also the glory of our crown.

* Heb. ii. 13.

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SERMON XIII.*

'OUR HOLY AND OUR BEAUTIFUL HOUSE, WHERE OUR FATHERS PRAISED THEE.'

Isaiah lxiv. 11.

I SELECT this sentence to introduce my present discourse, without reference to the context, because it expresses a sentiment which I have always sought to encourage, and describes the feelings by which we are all of us animated upon the present occasion, when we are readmitted into this, 'our holy and our beautiful house,' which has for several weeks been closed, in order that it might be cleansed and repaired.

What strong affection do these words imply, what tenderness of heart, what generous feeling, on the part of the prophet Isaiah! And even to inanimate things, when they are associated in our minds with those we honour and love, an attachment arises in the soul of every one who is capable of experiencing a disinterested affection. Because we love our God, we love the place where His honour dwelleth; and the services we render to the God of our love, we desire to be the very best we are capable of offering.

Seven years have now elapsed since, by your generosity, this church was reared in its magnificence; and

* [Preached at the re-opening of the Parish Church of Leeds, September 3, 1848.]

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what I said to you then I now repeat: It is a beautiful house that we have reared, let us make it a holy house, by frequenting it with hearts made holy by the mighty operations of God the Holy Ghost.

Seven years have now elapsed since the consecration of this church, and by your continued liberality the services have been performed, according to the model provided for us at the Reformation, in all the beauty of holiness. No attempt has been made to ape the services of that apostate Church, the Church of Rome, but the Prayer Book has been our guide, not more and not less. By the Prayer Book the option is given us of either singing or saying the services; and it is the glory of our Prayer Book that our services are always sublime and edifying, whether they be simply said, or whether, the aid of a choir being called in, they are chanted and sung. The mode is a thing indifferent, or rather it is a matter of taste and feeling: and your choice devolving upon a choral service, as that in the first place enjoined by the Prayer Book, you have enabled us to perform that service in a manner not surpassed by many of our cathedrals. Here thousands on a Sunday, and hundreds often on week days, have been accustomed to bear their part in our sublime services; and here those services have been solemnized by a due but not overstrained attention to the decent ceremonies enjoined by the reformed Church of England; ceremonies often peculiar to our Church, though consonant with primitive usage, and distinguishing it equally from Geneva and Rome.

These things have only attached us the more to this

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'our holy and our beautiful house;' we have loved the house and the services performed therein.

It has been reported, that in attention to the services of this church, preaching has been neglected; but I question much whether in any church in England more sermons have been delivered. Four times at least in every week are sermons preached from this pulpit, and very seldom so few as four; for sermons are delivered on every festival of the Church, while every day in Lent there has been a sermon; nine sermons in each Lenten week; and a similar course of daily preaching has been pursued before Confirmations, and other special occasions. And blessed be God, many seals to my ministry, since the church was consecrated, hath He vouchsafed me; many there are who love this 'our holy and our beautiful house' the more, because here, by the Spirit of God, the conversion of their souls was first effected; and never do we forget that preaching is one of the chief instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit, Who speaks, through the voice of His minister, not only for the edification, but also for the conversion of souls.

Here too, from the hands of our revered pastor, the Bishop, by whom labour is accounted nothing when the benefit of his spiritual children is concerned, upwards of five thousand young persons have, within the last seven years, received the grace of Confirmation. To those who have approached that blessed ordinance with faithful and penitent hearts, 'this our holy and our beautiful house,' in which their baptismal vows were renewed, and they received their bishop's blessing,

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must needs be dear. And inexpressibly dear it is to them, and to others, who have been accustomed to seek the strengthening and refreshing of their souls in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that sacrament administered here, at least once in every week.

And ye who seek and find happiness in a happy home, dear to you is this 'our holy and our beautiful house,' wherein ye were joined together in the bonds of a holy matrimony, and to which you brought your little ones when you desired to graft them into Christ through the laver of regeneration.

Because you have these and other good reasons for loving 'our holy and our beautiful house,' you have, my brethren, with your accustomed liberality, come forward with subscriptions for its cleansing and renovation, and will contribute further this day to exonerate the lay officers, the wardens of this church, by whose zeal, good taste, and sound judgment, this good work has been accomplished, from the burthen of a debt.

This you have done, and will do, because you love your 'holy and your beautiful house.'

But I have had a further object in selecting the words of our text, and I would apply them not merely to the material fabric; I would apply them also to that of which this building is but a symbol or type, to the Church of England itself, which we should love to contemplate as 'our holy and our beautiful house.' Unless we love her as such, we shall never dutifully serve her. They do not serve her dutifully, they are not her true and faithful children, whose hearts go a whoring after the abominations of other lands, and who, with alienated

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affections, are ever dwelling on what they call the 'miserable deficiencies' of the Church of England: who, if they dare not, as yet, declare our house to be unholy, still hesitate to pronounce it beautiful, and sigh for the garish ornaments, if not for the images and idols, with which foreign temples are adorned.

Let us take warning from the conduct and the fate of the Israelites.

Before the Babylonian captivity, there was not that devoted attachment among the sons of Israel to the institutions of their Church and country, which, after their return, became almost a superstition. They accepted their theocratic government, and the peculiar rites of their divine religion, but they were discontented under them: they regarded their isolation among the nations of the world, not as an honour, but with feelings of impatience; and in the prevalent idolatry, for which they could find a palliation, they wished to participate. They could not, in their pretended modesty, believe that a single nation could be right, and the rest of the world in error; and therefore, although they were willing to worship Jehovah as the supreme God, they desired to multiply mediators, to have 'Gods many and Lords many,' and like the nations around them, to bow down to wood and stone, the work of men's hands, and even to 'burn incense to the queen of heaven.'*

The consequence was that, in the absence of love to their own institutions, of attachment to that which

* Jer. xliv. 17.

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was their peculiarity and distinction, not only were individuals continually perverted, but the whole nation not unfrequently lapsed into idolatry.

It often happens that we know not the value of what we possess until, for our ingratitude, we are deprived of it. It was not until their holy cities were a wilderness, and Jerusalem a desolation;* it was not until their 'holy and their beautiful house' was burnt up with fire, and all their pleasant things laid waste; it was not until, weeping by the waters of Babylon, they had dwelt among the disgusting rites and the gross immoralities of the idolatrous nations, that they perceived the value of the divine institutions, and made their peculiarities their glory and their boast.

After the return of the Israelites from Babylon they loved their national institutions, and the very peculiarities of their worship; and thus being animated by love, although, as a perverse and stiff-necked people, they fell into other sins, they could not be accused of a want of patriotism, or of apostasy from the God of their fathers.

God grant, my brethren, that we may be taught to value, ere it be too late, the blessings which we as Englishmen possess in Church and State. Our forefathers loved their country, as the terms 'old England,' and 'merry England,' applied to their native land, sufficiently attest; and for their country they fought and bled, when a nation's greatness was erroneously supposed to consist in success in war. Our immediate ancestors, enamoured of that glorious constitution, the

* Isa. lxiv. 10.

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coping stone of which was laid in the Revolution of 1688, spared no expense of money or of blood to defend those rights and that liberty, which, dearly purchased, were highly prized.

And so also with respect to 'our holy and our beautiful house,' the Church of England: our forefathers loved it as the purest and best reformed Church in the world, the bulwark of the Reformation; and in defence of what they loved, our great divines, Hooker, and Andrewes, and Laud, and Taylor, and Barrow, and Bull, and a host of others, laboured by day, and robbed themselves of rest by night, and sharpened their pens in controversy; for this, 'our holy and our beautiful house,' confessors 'had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment;'* and martyrs died at the stake; and yet further, for his insidious attempts to undermine 'our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised their God,' our noble ancestors hurled a popish and profligate monarch from his throne, and condemning his offspring to perpetual banishment, effected a Revolution which is justly termed glorious; a Revolution which has attested the devotion of Englishmen, (a devotion not yet, I trust, extinct,) to the cause of Protestantism and the Church, to the cause of our constitution in Church and State.

I say, a devotion not yet extinct: but that devotion is waxing fainter and more faint, even because in our eagerness to correct abuses, which is right, we are too apt to be oblivious of the blessings which we possess.

* Heb. xi. 36.

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That there may be cobwebs on the walls of the most cleanly abode, of which the removal is desirable; that there are imperfections in everything, which, though reared on a divine foundation, has been reared by human hands; that new apartments may require to be added to the most commodious house; that ancient furniture may need to be burnished and repaired, and to be adapted to modern uses; all this we may freely admit; but if men exaggerate deficiencies or defects; the deficiencies or defects not peculiar to ourselves, but shared alike by others; if they are continually dwelling upon them, so that they can neither see for themselves nor point to others the peculiar holiness, the peculiar beauty, the superiority of our own 'most holy and most beautiful house,' there cannot be for it that love without which, as we have seen, no real devoted service can be rendered.

This error was at one time confined to those who, at heart Puritans in doctrine, if not Presbyterians in discipline, conformed to the Church, either because it was, as they supposed, established, or because it afforded them a more extended sphere of usefulness, or for some other reason not perhaps assignable even by themselves; but who, while conforming, were free in their censures of the Church for retaining those points of Catholic practice and doctrine by which the Church of England is distinguished from all other Protestant communities.

But, alas! this alienation of heart from the Church at whose altars they serve is no longer confined to these, and such as these: others there are who, groping

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in the darkness of an opposite extreme, are as free in their censures of the Church for asserting those grand and important Protestant truths, by maintaining which the Church of England is distinguished from the apostate Church of Rome. At the same time the two extremes unite in this, that, the one taking the meeting-house, and the other the mass-house, for their model, they, in act as well as in word, disparage the Book of Common Prayer: the one extreme adds to the Prayer Book hymns, too often the composition of Nonconformists; the other extreme introduces forms and ceremonies which were wisely rejected at the Reformation, and refers to the Breviary or the Missal, as if these were an authority to guide us in the celebration of our reformed services. Those who are in the one extreme omit whole portions of the Prayer Book, because, imagining themselves wiser than the Church, they reject the Church's teaching with respect to baptism; and those in the opposite extreme so comport themselves at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as to show that they think the Church deficient in her teaching as it regards that holy sacrament.

In the absence of love, the defection of such persons, or of their disciples, to the ranks either of Protestant or of Romish dissent, is no more wonderful than the frequent idolatry of the Israelites before they learned to love their theocratic system, and to rejoice in its superiority to every other form of religion or scheme of polity throughout the world.

Be it for us, my brethren, especially in these days of change, to take off our eyes from the blemishes

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which may slightly deface 'our holy and our beautiful house;' let us dwell upon the many advantages which we possess, in being permitted therein to worship our God in the beauty of holiness. Let us love the Church of England for her very peculiarities, those peculiarities which, keeping her distinct from the Romanists and the Rationalists, seem to identify her with the primitive and scriptural Church.

We will love the Church of England, for that it is the ancient Catholic Church of this realm, the only Church, (for the Romanists form a sect of modern introduction,) which can by an uninterrupted series of ordinations, trace its origin from those zealous missionaries from various nations by whom Christianity was first introduced into this island, and through them to the holy Apostles.* In this our Catholic Church, all primitive and Catholic truth is held; all the doc-

* The kingdom of Mercia, containing the counties of Chester, Nottingham, Derby, Stafford, Salop, Northampton, Leicester, Lincoln, Huntingdon, Rutland, Warwick, Worcester, Oxford, Gloucester, Buckingham, Bedford, Hereford, and part of Hertford, was converted to Christianity by Finanus, Diuma, Ceollach, and Trumhere, all Irish bishops. Bede, Hist. lib. iii. c. 21. The kingdom of Northumberland, which contained York, Lancaster, and the northern parts of England, and extended a considerable way into Scotland, was chiefly converted by Aidan, another Irish bishop. Paulinus had been sent on this mission by Justus of Canterbury, successor of Augustine, but was soon obliged to retire, and paganism resumed its sway, until Aidan arrived under happier auspices, and converted the nation. Ibid. lib. iii. c. 3, 5, and 6. Essex, Middlesex, and Hertford were converted by Cedd, another Irish bishop, after they had relapsed into paganism. Ibid. lib. iii. c. 22. The Picts and Scots of Scotland were converted by Columba, an Irishman, first abbot of Iona, in the sixth century. Ibid. lib. iii. c. 4.—*See Palmer's Origines Liturgicæ.*

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trines which were held universally by the universal Church, before the division of the East and the West through the ambition of the pontiffs of Rome; all Catholic truth as distinguishable and distinguished from medieval superstition and Romish corruption. Herein we are taught to worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity; while we devoutly recognize in the work of man's salvation the character of God the Father, the Divinity and work of God the Son; the Personality, the Divinity, and the grace of God the Holy Ghost, three Persons but one God: we are warned of the fall, the corruption, the guilt, the helplessness of man; we are told of the Incarnation of the Son of God, that in Him, becoming man without ceasing to be God, in the God-Man, there might be a Mediator between the divine and the human natures. The Church preaches to us the necessity of repentance towards God, and of turning from every sin: the atonement for sin by the blood of God: the doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of the atonement; and the necessity of having that blood applied to our souls, and our union with Christ effected, by the sacraments of the Gospel: the Church preaches to us the sanctification of heart and life by the grace of the Spirit, to be sought for in the ordinances of the sanctuary, by earnest prayer and a self-denying life: the Church preaches to us the resurrection of the dead, the future judgment of all mankind according to their works; eternal punishment in hell, as the wages of sin; and eternal happiness in heaven, as the gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. In this our portion of the Catholic Church, the Church

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here by God established in England, the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered, not mutilated as in the Church of Rome; and therefore 'our holy and our beautiful house,' we as Catholics have reason to love.

But moreover we will love the Church of England, not for her Catholicism only, but for her Protestantism also: for the title of Protestant stands in antagonism not to Catholicism, as deceivers teach, but to Romanism. We glory in our title of Protestant; for by that title we proclaim to all the world that we protest against 'the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints:'* not only do we declare these things to be 'repugnant to the word of God,' but while we protest against the Romish violation both of Scripture and of primitive practice, in withholding the cup in the Lord's Supper from the people,† whereby it becomes doubtful whether by the Romanists that sacrament is ever received: we protest also against their dogma of Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, which 'is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions;'‡ we declare that 'the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual;' and that 'there is none other satisfaction for sin but

* Article xxii. † Article xxx.
‡ Article xxviii.

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that alone;' and we therefore protest against the sacrifices of masses, in the which the Romanists say that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt; which we pronounce to be 'blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.'* If this do not vindicate our Protestantism, I do not know what will; but we are Protestant also in the grand doctrine of justification by faith only, independently of works, as that doctrine was defined at the Reformation in opposition to the scholastic and medieval doctrine of justification by works, adopted by the Romish Church in the assembly of Trent, and the origin of some of her worst corruptions: we are Protestant in the distinction we maintain, and which I incessantly point out to you, between justification and sanctification, between the imputed righteousness by which we are justified, and the imparted righteousness which, though necessary, has no share in justifying us; between the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus, through which, when it is received in our souls by faith, and applied to us by the sacraments, we are accounted what we are not; and the righteousness of sanctification, which, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, is our own, but is so imperfect, that when we look to this our inward righteousness, we strike upon our breasts and say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' and feel that without a Saviour we should die, without a Redeemer we should perish.†

* Article xxxi.

† On this subject see Heurtley's Bampton Lectures. These Lectures, and his Sermons on Union with Christ, are an invaluable addition to our theological treasury.

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There are now two extremes in the Church: the one extreme would receive the Articles without the Prayer Book; the other, the Prayer Book without the Articles. From either extreme all those who love the Church of England as it is must stand apart. We are not so to hold justification by faith as to set aside the sacramental religion of the Prayer Book; neither are we so unduly to elevate the sacraments as to set aside the doctrine of justification by faith. When the Protestant element in the constitution of the Church of England is too exclusively regarded, as was the case a few years ago, we must contend for our Catholicism; but when Catholicism, misunderstood by the weak, and perverted by the artful and designing, is verging upon Popery,—then it becomes needful to display our zeal as Protestants. Puritanism is a bad thing, but Popery is worse.

It is because it is both Catholic and Protestant, (not Romish nor Rationalistic,) that ours is a holy and a beautiful house; and holy and beautiful are our services also when the requisitions of the Prayer Book are duly observed; they tacitly protest against either extreme: against the irreverence of Ultra-protestantism on the one hand, against the mummery and the superstition of Romanism on the other; so that, as Grotius was compelled by his love of truth to admit, 'the English Liturgy is the finest service in the world:' it is so in the dignified simplicity of its significant ceremonies, in the chastened fervour of its prayers, in the heavenly aspirations of its praises. Where indeed can we find a composition so comprehensive and yet so condensed, so

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chastened in feeling, so fervent in devotion, so sublime in sentiment, so simple in language, as the reformed liturgy of 'our holy and our beautiful house'? We only turn to it with the greater affection, and with more grateful admiration of the wisdom which guided our Reformers, if we chance to see what the liturgy before the Reformation was, or happen to meet with the disgusting compositions which pass under that name, which the Church of Rome, in its corruption, still retains.

And now, my brethren, I have led you on from the contemplation of that beautiful fabric in which we are assembled to the contemplation of the holiness and beauty of the Church of England: and onwards and upwards, further still, would I lead you, until these feelings of reverential love, exhibited first towards the creature, find their centre, termination, and perfection in the Creator. We are to follow the course of our nature in this as in every other respect; and a law of our nature it is, that commencing at a scarcely discernible point, our faculties gradually expand; we begin with childish things, which, when we come to man's estate, we lay aside; we commence with what is visible and material, and we grow into an acquaintance with the immaterial and invisible; all our faculties have their infancy; we gradually advance; we must creep before we can walk, and walk before we run and so it is with respect to our minds; with our principles, our sentiments, our affections. All are eventually to rest upon God. As the fire to its sphere, as the stone to its centre, as rivers to the sea, so to the

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Lord God Almighty, to God the Holy Trinity, as to an Absorbing Centre, through Christ the only medium, the sanctified heart in every principle, faculty, wish, hope, and feeling, is attracted; until in the beatific vision it will lose all but its individuality. But we arrive not at this perfection at once; for this, the end of our existence, we are to be educated and trained. Our affections are first directed to our earthly relations, in order to give vigour and play to our tenderness and sensibility. Before they rest upon God as our Father, (as must be the case in him who is a perfect man in Christ Jesus,) they are to be exercised in childhood towards our earthly parents: and, in like manner, we pass from the love of the brethren with whom we are associated to the love of the Church; from the love of the Church to the love of God; and when by the love of God our hearts are converted, they return with a more enlightened love to the Church; since the Church is then regarded as the mystical Body of Christ, and in loving the Head we must love the Body also. As the moisture taken from the earth and received into the clouds returns again to earth in genial and refreshing showers, so the affections, drawn from this world and fixed on the things of heaven, return, in their sanctification, to our churches and our homes, blessing and being blessed.

As from simple coloured rays, all compound coloured rays are formed, and all coloured rays combined make a white one; so will all our affections be ultimately combined in the one overwhelming affection of love to God; but until this be accomplished, which, in

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its fulness, will never be, until, (which God grant,) we are just men made perfect in the world to come, each separate affection must be duly cultivated, in subordination to the first and great commandment: the affection of parents towards their children, and of children towards their parents, of husbands towards their wives, and of wives towards their husbands, of patriots towards their country, and of churchmen towards their Church.

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SERMON XIV.*

'LET ALL THINGS BE DONE DECENTLY AND IN ORDER.'

1 Corinthians xiv. 40.

WHY I have selected this subject for my sermon to-day, you will, without further prompting, perceive. That the feelings of him who is addressing you are deeply interested in the controversy now raised in Parliament and in Convocation, he will not attempt to deny. But he does not desire to raise a party cry on the subject, and he will only intreat you to qualify yourselves to form an opinion on that controversy, by considering what are the things to be done decently and in order—what an ordinance is. Let this be our first enquiry.

Now an ordinance is a rite, the observance of which has been ordained by proper authority.

A rite is a thing indifferent until it is appointed or ordained by authority to which we are bound to defer, and then it ceases to be a thing indifferent, and it becomes an ordinance.

As regards an ordinance, it is not necessary that we should perceive the reason of its having been appointed or ordained. That must depend upon cir-

* [Preached in the Cathedral, Chichester, July 1874. The controversy' referred to was on the 'Public Worship Regulation Bill.']

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cumstances; we may do so or not. A man of ability may see wisdom in an observance which excites the ridicule of fools: and to the angels of light reasons may be palpable for a divine appointment which may be, while in this world, undiscoverable by the less enlightened intellect of man. The simple question is, whether a certain rite or observance be or be not ordained by the proper authority; that is to say, whether it be or be not an ordinance.

Thus ordinances are either divine or human, as they are appointed or ordained by God or by man. The consideration of human ordinances will naturally fall under our second head; we now direct our minds to divine ordinances. A divine ordinance is a rite or observance ordained by God. And when to the observance of a rite ordained by God, a particular blessing is attached by God,—when He makes an ordinance a means for conveying grace to him who observes it,—then to expect the promised grace is the part of faith, and to observe the ordinance a religious duty. But everything depends upon the fact of the observance being ordained,—that is, on the fact of its being a divine ordinance.

We read in the Book of Joshua that when the armies of Israel stood before Jericho 'the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye

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shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the rams' horns, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him.'* The people obeyed, and they took the city. They received an ordinance; by observing the ordinance they expected a blessing: they did observe the ordinance, and they were blessed. But if we were to pursue such a course as this when beleaguering a city, we should justly expose ourselves to a charge of folly, if not of madness. And why? because such a course is not ordained by God. What was in this instance an ordinance to the Israelites is not an ordinance to us, neither was it a standing ordinance with them. But standing ordinances the Israelites had, and to expect a particular grace from the observance of such was, in them, not superstition but religion. It was, for example, a religious act on the part of the Jews to circumcise their children, for circumcision was the rite ordained by God to admit men into the privileges of the Mosaic covenant; the ordinance through which that special grace was conferred upon them; a gift and a grace over and above what is vouchsafed to mankind in general.

But when the Mosaic dispensation had been superseded by, or rather had merged into, the Christian, then to observe circumcision, expecting grace therefrom,

* Joshua vi. 2–5.

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became superstition, and to observe it with that expectation was condemned by St. Paul. What had been an ordinance once was an ordinance no longer; the order for observing it was withdrawn, and with it the consequent blessing. The same is to be said of the rite of sacrifice, the holy seasons, and the feasts, such as those of the Passover and the Tabernacles; at one time they were ordinances; but when they ceased to be divine appointments, that is, when they ceased to be ordinances, then the Apostle said, 'Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days,'* referring, of course, not to Christian sabbaths or Christian holidays, but to Jewish. And so we may learn to distinguish between religion and superstition in regard to ordinances. It is religion to observe a rite, and to expect a blessing from its observance, if the rite has been divinely ordained as a means of grace, and the promise of the blessing made by God himself. On the other hand, the observance of a rite, with the expectation of obtaining grace from so doing, when the rite has not been ordained for that purpose by God, or when, as in the case of circumcision, the promise of grace, once attached to it, has been withdrawn,—this is superstition. Superstition is the observance of uncommanded rites, expecting grace therefrom. We will here pause to illustrate our position. We are exhorted in all our needs to have recourse to prayer; 'Pray without ceasing,' saith the Apostle; 'praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching

* Col. ii. 16.

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thereunto with all perseverance.'* 'In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God,'†—in everything, for things necessary as well for the body as the soul. Oh! how great is the comfort to the Christian soul, to know that our heavenly Father is the hearer of prayer; and how wonderfully do those who watch the particular providences of God detect a return to their prayers in various and unexpected ways. When the sceptic asks us why we should tell God what the Omnipotent Lord God already knows, we answer, it is written—we have the command and the promise in Holy Scripture—it is an ordinance—we know from experience that God is in very deed the hearer of prayer.

But what is prayer? It is the act of devotion, the means of approaching God; nothing more. We are told, therefore, to worship in spirit and in truth; to ask in faith. There must be with the words a concurrence of the will; God expressly condemns the people who draw nigh unto Him with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. Therefore it is superstition to do as the Papists do, to consider prayer not only as an act, a means of approaching God, but as a work the performance of which merits a reward. Seeking justification by their works, they regard prayer as a work, the performance of which is placed to that debtor and creditor account which they are led by such a system to keep with their Almighty Judge. Prayers are, in their account, according to one of their

* 1 Thess. v. 17. Eph. vi. 18. † Phil. iv. 6.

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great authorities, 'as the words of a charmer'; they prevail even when they are not understood. Attention is important, says another of their authorities, but the only attention necessary is attention to the words, that every word be uttered; that is to say, that the work be fairly done, the charm properly uttered. If ye do the outward work, it is said, the Church, that is the corrupt Church of Rome, is satisfied.

Now all this use of prayer as a meritorious work is superstition, because prayer is not ordained by God for this purpose; nay, it is, as we have seen, positively condemned by God in words, and is especially opposed to the Gospel, which teaches us that we are justified by faith only. On the same ground, because it is not an ordinance of God, we condemn as superstitious the Romish notion that prayers are more efficacious when offered at shrines containing the relics of dead saints. But on the other hand, it is not superstition, it is religion, to expect in social and public worship a peculiar grace, distinct from and in addition to the grace we seek for and obtain in our private devotions; for not only are we commanded 'not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is,' but the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised that 'where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them.'* The Omnipresent promises a special presence under such circumstances; and it is not superstition, but the part of faith to expect that which is promised to come to pass.

* Heb. x. 25. St. Matt. xviii. 20.

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Again, it is religion to value intercessory prayer; to invite the prayers of our friends, and to promise our own prayers to them in return, because by the God of heaven we are commanded to pray both with and for one another; we are instructed that we can assist one another, as by our labours so by our prayers; and we are told that the prayer of the righteous man availeth much for others as well as for himself. But it is superstition to invoke the prayers of the dead, however righteous they may have been. We do not, on the one hand, rest our objection to this superstition merely on the ground, though it is solid ground, that we have no means of knowing that the dead can hear us; nor, on the other, do we give heed to the argument *à priori*, though we admit it to be specious, that since the intercessions of living friends are requested, there can be no absurdity in asking the intercession of dead friends; especially as, in common with us, we know that they are employed evermore in prayer. We enter not into arguments of this sort on the one side or on the other; we content ourselves with requiring those who invoke the prayers of the dead to produce authority from Scripture in favour of a practice which, though early introduced into the Church, has involved the Church of Rome in the sin of idolatry; a fact which is a solemn warning to us of the danger there is in the indulgence of superstition.

On the same ground we condemn as superstitious the use of holy water as a means of grace, while it would be irreligious not to expect grace of regeneration from the sacrament of baptism duly administered

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and received with the requisite qualifications, because the command of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' our Lord adding, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' while St. Peter teaches that baptism doth now save us, save us, not from the penalty of eternal death, if afterwards we fall into wilful sin, for a baptized person falling into sin, unless he be converted and repent and amend, becomes twofold more the child of hell, but save us from that penalty of original sin in which every son of Adam is involved unless he be grafted into Christ.

Once more, and as our last illustration. As the Church says in the thirty-first Article, 'The sacrifices of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain and guilt, are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.' Not only are they without authority from Scripture, but, as the Article saith, 'the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction but that alone.' But although this is, therefore, among the very worst of superstitions, yet it is only religion to assert, with the Church, in the twenty-eighth Article, that 'the Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death, insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith

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receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.' This is a truth clearly revealed in Scripture; to accept it and to act upon it is not superstition but religion. We shall conclude this part of our subject by observing that our only method of discovering whether an ordinance be a divine ordinance, is by reference to Holy Scripture, for Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation. The Church may err, and therefore the Church itself appeals to Scripture, and refuses to acknowledge as a divine ordinance what is not read therein or what may not be proved to be a divine ordinance thereby. Therefore if any section of the Church shall presume to appoint as a divine ordinance, that is, as a means of grace, any rite for which there is no Scriptural authority, that branch of the Church or that community of Christians is guilty of superstitious practices, and becomes obnoxious to the malediction pronounced upon all who add to or take from the Word of God. But it is obvious here to remark that every branch of the Church must have certain rites which are not commanded by Scripture; nay we cannot obey God and act upon the injunction in our text, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' unless other rites besides those directly enjoined by God Himself are observed.

II. We have now considered what those things are, to the decent and orderly performance of which the Apostle exhorts us. We have seen that God has been pleased to appoint certain rites to be divine ordinances

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or means of grace in His Church. But God has not appointed how those ordinances are to be administered, under what form public prayer shall be offered, under what regulations his sacraments shall be dispensed. He has only given a rule, 'Let all things,' every ordinance, 'be done decently and in order.' Now the important question arises: To whom is this injunction addressed? If it be left to the discretion of each individual to do what he, in his own opinion, thinks decent and orderly; if, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you hath his psalm and his doctrine; if one adopts one posture, and another person adopts another posture, if each may speak or be silent, stand, sit, or kneel, as he will, then not decency and order, but confusion, must ensue; and if this state of things were allowable, where would be the use of such an injunction as 'Let all things be done decently and in order.'

It is quite clear that the injunction is addressed to the Church, to the aggregate of Christians, to the body of worshippers in the same locality. But how can the Church act upon this injunction, except by making ordinances of her own, by ordaining that such a rite shall be performed in such or such a way—in this way and not in that? And then we undoubtedly act on the Scriptural principle when we obey this ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. It is by our observing individually the order of the Church, that things are done decently; for as St. Augustine saith, 'That is decent which is done according to the prescribed order of the Church.' A rite is in itself a thing indifferent, but

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when it is ordained by God to be a means of grace then it ceases to be a thing indifferent, for, by that order of God, it has become a divine ordinance.

Again, a rite is in itself a thing indifferent; but when it is appointed by the Church as the way of administering a divine ordinance, this rite also ceases to be a thing indifferent to churchmen; it becomes—not a means of grace; no, for that pertains to a divine ordinance; but—a means of decency and order; and wilfully to neglect a means of decency and order, or of set purpose to contravene it, is to disobey God and to act contrary to the Scriptures, when they say, 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' With respect to divine ordinances or means of grace, the sin to be avoided is, as we have seen, that of superstition;—the expecting grace from what are not really ordinances. With respect to human ordinances or ceremonies, the vice we are to avoid is that of a perverse temper. We keep divine ordinances and have recourse to the means of grace, as Christians, in obedience to the divine command; we observe some ceremonies and refuse to observe others, as churchmen, in obedience to the Church to which we belong, and in accordance with the divine precept, 'Let all things be done decently and in order.'

But if the power of appointing the ceremonies of religion pertains to the Church, the Church has power to abrogate or to change what at one time it may have decreed; for what is decent and orderly at one time may not be decent and orderly at another time. Therefore ceremonies may be abolished, or changed, or ordained afresh; yes, but still by the Church, not by

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individuals. Divine ordinances can only be made or changed by God. Therefore, while the present dispensation lasts, they are unalterable. We cannot make or abolish a sacrament; the making of sacraments, that is, the changing of human into divine ordinances, is one of the sins of the Church of Rome. But the making of ceremonies does belong, as we have seen, to the Church;—these, though made under the divine sanction, are nevertheless ordinances of man. The power which makes has equal authority to alter. Consequently our 34th Article states, that 'every particular and national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies;' a subject which is enlarged upon in the very beautiful Preface to the Prayer Book.

On this principle our Reformers proceeded to act. Many ceremonies before the Reformation were abused to the purposes of superstition, i.e., they were resorted to as means of grace; therefore they were abolished: many ceremonies, before the Reformation, had ceased to be means of decency, therefore they were changed; many on the other hand were retained, not only because they were decent, but also because they were ancient, for the purpose of keeping before our minds the fact that ours is not a new Church, but the old Catholic Church handed down from our forefathers, and like our civil constitution,—reformed. From this we may clearly perceive what we ought to do in order that we may follow the injunction of our text. We should endeavour to do what the Church orders.

If we on set purpose omit a ceremony, that is,

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one of the Church's ordinances, when it can be duly observed, then we act disorderly and we disobey God. If, on the other hand, we insist upon a ceremony which is not ordained by the Church, thereby adding to the ceremonial, we walk disorderly, and furthermore, we expose ourselves to the charge of superstition; of superstition, because, supposing ourselves to be religious, we should not (in opposition to the command of God that we should conform to the regulations of the Church) add to the rites of the Church, unless we regarded the added rite as essential, and we should not think it essential unless we regarded it as a means of grace; and as we have seen, to regard as a means of grace what God has not ordained to be such, is superstition. We have here ascertained from Scripture certain principles provided for the guidance of those congregations and their ministers who, in arranging the services of their Church, desire to act upon Scriptural principles.

We have seen also, in pursuing this subject, what is clearly our duty as individuals. The question is, not whether we think that this thing might be better done, or that something else might have been better omitted. We have to ask, what does the Church ordain? Some persons think we have too much of ceremony, others that we have too little: let each retain his opinion if he will; but let each also bend his proud will to the appointment of the Church, and in the act of humiliation he will be blessed.

But we must pursue the subject a little further. The Church of England permits considerable latitude

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in the regulation of her services. Something is decreed by the Church generally, and something is left to each particular congregation. A general rather than a particular uniformity is required; a uniformity of principle more than of detail. For instance, the Church permits the services to be sung or said. It remains open, therefore, to each congregation with its minister to decide whether they will have a choral service or a plain service.

In various other ways differences will occur as to what the Church does actually rule. The traditional practice of congregations will vary as to the mode of carrying out rubrical directions. And this must continue to be the case until the Church in convocation shall render her directions more definite and precise.

But here arises a practical question as to our conduct as individuals. We admit that the apostolic command, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' is directed to the Church; and we have seen that each national or provincial Church is empowered to make its own regulations with this end in view. We are prepared to obey this ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. But it sometimes happens that we find ourselves in a congregation in which the directions of the Church are, in our opinion, either carelessly mistaken or purposely set at nought. How ought we under those circumstances to comport ourselves? Let us take one case by way of example. In some congregations we find it to be customary to turn to the east when the Creed is rehearsed. In other congregations both minister and people remain stationary. How often do

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we see a man looking perversely to the west when the congregation is turning to the east. On the other hand, how often do you see another obstinately and ostentatiously turning to the east when others are standing as they were. We take our example from either extreme, and there is in right-minded persons an intuitive perception that both parties are in error. They are in error plainly because, supposing either party to be right as to the letter of the law, they are both violators of its spirit. Why are ceremonies of any sort appointed? Not because they are means of grace, but because they are means of decency and order. But if we observe a ceremony when others do not, or refuse to observe it when others do, we act indecently, we walk disorderly, we violate the spirit of the apostolic injunction.

If the minister and the congregation are in fault, for their fault they are accountable to the Bishop, who is appointed by a divine order not only to ordain elders in every city, but also to set in order the things that are wanting in the Church. They will not be led right by the ill manners and disorderly conduct of an individual whose conduct, offensive to others, should lead him to self-examination. Is not his proud heart thinking not of God's glory, but his own? Is he not seeming to say, See how much wiser I am than you. Stand apart, I am holier than thou. I know better than not to do this; or, I am not superstitious, and therefore I abstain from doing what men wiser and more holy regard as a thing indifferent. Verily, my brethren, the pharisaic spirit still lingers in the Christian Church; and such a disposition is not the disposition with which

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to approach the ordinances of that God who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

III. And this brings me to the last head of my discourse. Ordinances are means of special grace, but ordinances are not charms. They do not confer grace upon all. They only confer the special grace they are intended to convey upon those who, by the preventing grace of God have acquired the dispositions which qualify them to approach the ordinances worthily, that is, as the Scriptures teach us, who come with repentance and with faith; repentance which implies an earnest desire to lead a new life, and faith which implies an entire reliance for salvation upon Jesus, upon Jesus only, upon Jesus exclusively, and His alone merits. No one will come to Jesus as the only Saviour until he sees himself a miserable and a helpless sinner. Therefore repentance precedes faith. Oh! my brethren, let us examine our hearts and see how sin cleaves to our holiest things; let us consider the requirements and the demands of God's all-righteous law; and let us compare therewith our conduct, our words, our thoughts, our motives, and of a truth the holiest among us will exclaim, 'Unclean! unclean! a Saviour or I perish, a Redeemer or I die.' Behold Him in Jesus, behold Him, I say, in Jesus, the Lord from heaven, the very God of heaven incarnate, omnipotent to save.

The everlasting Son of the Father, one as God with the Father and the Holy Ghost, came down from the right hand of the majesty on high to make that satisfaction to the infinite justice of the Holy, Holy,

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Holy Lord God Almighty, even God the holy Trinity, which the divine holiness as well as the divine justice demanded ere our race could be pardoned, or divine mercy have room to operate. Without ceasing to be God He became man also, and the God-man dying upon the cross, He hath made a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Redemption is universal; but God has decreed that it must be accepted by us. He hath provided a remedy, but we must apply it to our souls. He gives the marriage garment, even His own righteousness, but we must array ourselves in it. In a word we must have faith, faith to accept Jesus as our Saviour, and to rest our right to heaven exclusively on our union by faith with Him. Repentance and faith are therefore prerequisites in those who seek grace through the ordinances of the Gospel as administered in the Church. The ordinance without this internal qualification is nothing, but the qualification without the ordinance is insufficient, for we are not only to be justified, but also we must be sanctified. Special grace is to be so sought that we may by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, operating through the appointed means, be gradually qualified, not for grace only, but for glory; that through the sanctification of the Holy Ghost we may obtain that new nature and those heavenly dispositions—that new spiritual sense, without which heaven would be no heaven to us.

What is that beautiful prospect which we gaze upon from the various points of the lovely Isle of Wight to the man who is blind? What to the deaf man the

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music by which our hearts have been attuned to devotion? In like manner, to man by nature blind and deaf to things spiritual, the sights and sounds and joys of Paradise would be as nothing. We require a new nature, a nature gradually formed in us by the progressive work of sanctification, and therefore while we are doing our duty in the state of life to which we are providentially called, we must, I say, seek for sanctifying grace, through the appointed means, through the ordinances divinely appointed for that purpose.

And so we conclude. Keep the ordinances as means of grace, but remember that they are means of grace only to the penitent and the faithful; keep the ordinances of God for your own sake; keep those ordinances of men through which they are administered decently and in order, for the Lord's sake. Remember that the Holy Spirit enjoins us, through the Apostle, 'We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us;' * that is, as our Church explains it, according to ordinances appointed as means of decency and order.

* 2 Thess. iii. 6.

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SERMON XV.

ON THE BAPTISMAL OFFICES.

'The washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'—Titus iii. 5.

I AM to speak to you this day of the offices appointed by the Church for the ministration of the sacrament of Baptism; and may God the Holy Ghost, through whose gracious influences upon our souls we were in that holy sacrament regenerated, be with us, that the Gospel propounded in this ordinance may be blessed to us, so that we may be more and more zealous to make our calling and election sure!

For Baptism, the Church of England provides us with three offices:—I. The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants, to be used in Church; II. The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children in Houses; III. The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years, and able to answer for themselves.

The first office is the basis of the other two; the two latter differing from it only in those matters of detail which the alteration of circumstances requires. To the Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants I shall, therefore, chiefly direct your attention, only incidentally making observations on the other offices.

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And here we must commence with a few remarks on the practice of baptizing infants, as the Baptism of Infants is nowhere commanded in Scripture. The Baptism of Infants is rather the necessary result of two great doctrines, which none except heretics are found to deny; viz. that all men are conceived and born in sin; and that the inward and spiritual grace which is conveyed to the soul by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of this sacrament, is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. In other words, if you believe in original sin, and if you believe that regeneration is the grace of Baptism, from this faith Infant Baptism follows as a matter of course. If you do not believe these facts, why do you bring your infants to be baptized at all? If men deny either of these facts,—either original sin, or the regenerating grace of Baptism, they can only protect themselves against the charge of superstition by producing some express command in Scripture for the Baptism of Infants. So inconsistent are those persons who deny either the doctrine of original sin, or the doctrine of regeneration, and yet resort to Infant Baptism! But the question assumes a very different shape with us Catholic and orthodox Christians, who believe in these fundamental verities of the Bible. If our children are born under the curse of original sin; if one by one they come into the world under the divine curse; if no one so born can escape the penalty of original sin except through union with Christ our Saviour; and if 'as many of us as have been baptized

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into Christ, have put on Christ;'* if, as the Apostle says, we are 'buried with Him in Baptism;'† if, as St. Peter teaches us, 'Baptism doth also now save us,'‡— which, of course, it can only do by uniting us to Christ, the only Saviour: if these things be so, the Christian parent asks, not Must I, am I commanded, to bring my infant to Baptism? but, May I, am I permitted? And joyful is the sound to him of his Saviour's words, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.' An ample permission! But how are they, not as yet capable of faith, to come to Jesus except through Baptism? When our Lord gave His command, that nations should be taught and be baptized, because He did not exclude infants, we may argue that He intended to include them; since the Jews, in baptizing converts, baptized the children as well as adults; and to Jews who would so understand Him our Lord spake. And in like manner, when we read of the Apostles baptizing households, we may conclude that they did what their successors also have done ever since,—that they baptized the infants; for if they had not baptized infants, their omission so to do would have been expressly recorded in what was written for the instruction of Jews as well as Gentiles. So easy is it to find authority from Scripture for what we do in this respect, if our action is the result of our faith in the two Scriptural doctrines to which we have referred: and whereas, by the absence of an express command, heretics, who deny the facts of original sin, and of regeneration as the

* Gal. iii. 27. † Col. ii. 12. ‡ 1 St. Pet. iii. 21.

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grace of Baptism, are justly censured for superstition when they bring their infants to the font, although, on the faith of the Church, infants so brought are received.

The immense importance attached by the Church to the administration of this sacrament appears from this, that she pronounces upon the fate of the infants thus baptized: 'It is certain, by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.'* What comfort, what holy joy do Christian parents derive from this assurance! The perils of infancy are so many, that no believer will delay the Baptism of his infant longer than he can help. He is aware that the law of election, the law by which God elects some persons and not others, is undiscoverable to us: but one mark of election is Baptism; and how vast the consolation, if our infant die, to know for certain that he has received the sign, and has gone into the next world an elect infant! What may be the fate of other infants we know not; we only know that they were born into this world under a curse, and God hath not so ordered events as visibly to remove the curse from them: and therefore, they who were born into this world in original sin, have, with the curse of original sin, gone into the next world. But the Church of England, herein differing from the Romish assembly of Trent, pronounces nothing whatever on their condition. She is content (assuming as she does the regeneration of

* See Rubric at the end of the Office.

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every infant that is baptized) with saying, 'It is certain by God's word that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.'

Now the office, according to which the clergy of the Church of England administer this sacrament to infants, may be divided into three parts.

The first consists of the preparation for Baptism. It is derived from an old office in the primitive Church, which was prepared for the admission of a convert into the order of catechumens, in which order he frequently remained for some time previously to Baptism, when Baptism was administered to him as an adult. This office was blended with that of Baptism in the middle ages, when by the conversion of nations, adult Baptism had become infrequent; and even in the office of Infant Baptism, the ceremonies of admitting a catechumen were adopted. At the Reformation, our Church at first retained, but afterwards discontinued, the mystical and figurative rites, such as the giving of salt, and the anointing with oil, which belonged to the original office of catechumens, not in all, but in many of the primitive Churches; but she retained the ancient prayers and addresses.

The introductory part of the office relates first to the child which is brought to Baptism, and the congregation are reminded that all men are conceived and born in sin; which shows that infants are sinners, creatures involved in original sin: the congregation is also reminded that our Saviour Christ saith, 'None can enter the kingdom of God except he be regenerate

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and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost,' this sacrament thus being, as the Catechism teaches, generally necessary to salvation; they are then besought to call upon God, 'that He will grant unto this child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same.' Then follow the two collects, through which the Church does what the congregation have just been exhorted to do; in the second of which, used in our Church long before the Reformation, we call upon God 'for this infant,' 'that he, coming to Thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration:' the purport of both collects being, first, that God by His Holy Spirit would regenerate the infant, and then grant him the grace of perseverance; because, in spite of his regeneration, the Church knows that the child may perish everlastingly.

That portion of St. Mark's Gospel is then read, in which we have our Lord's command to His disciples, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God;' a passage which, on the principle before laid down, the Church produces, in order to show the divine sanction she possesses for her practice of Infant Baptism.

In this place there is, of necessity, a variation between this office and that appointed to be used in the Baptism of such as are of riper years. There the Church appoints the commencement of the third chap-

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ter of St. John's Gospel to be read, in which our Lord instructs us that 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' that 'except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'* From which passage of Scripture the Church asserts her doctrine thus: 'Ye hear from the Gospel the express words of our Saviour Christ, that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of Baptism, where it may be had: a fact further proved by reference to other Scriptures.' Men who do not believe the promises of God made to us in this sacrament, refuse to receive this passage of St. John as referring to Baptism. But I am addressing members of the Church, persons distinguished from heretics by the fact of their accepting Scripture in the sense of the Church; and they, of course, cannot entertain a doubt upon the subject; the Church most solemnly affirms, that when our blessed Saviour declares, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,' He declares the great necessity of Baptism; appropriating to Baptism what our Lord says of regeneration.

But Baptism is not conferred unconditionally either on adults or infants. The Catechism teaches us that it is required of persons to be baptized that they have 'repentance whereby they forsake sin, and faith whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.' If an adult, then,

* St. John iii. 3, 5.

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come to holy Baptism without repentance, and without faith in the promises of God made to us in the sacrament of Baptism, he receives the sacrament unworthily, and is in a predicament similar to that in which any one is placed who receives unworthily the other holy sacrament; he receives it to his condemnation, and the prayer of charity is, 'that the thought of his heart may be forgiven him.'*

On this account it is that certain questions are put to adult persons before they are baptized, to ascertain whether they have good conscience towards God. The baptismal covenant was always made by question and answer, and this, too, in the apostolic age; for St. Peter calls Baptism the answer, or as the word rather signifies, the asking of, or concerning a good conscience.†

The object being to have a good conscience, and the fact of having a good conscience being a sufficient qualification for Baptism, there can, of course, be no impediment to the reception of baptismal grace presented on the part of infants; they are under the curse of original sin, to rescue them from which you bring them to Baptism; but they have no actual sin of which to repent, and though they have not faith, yet there is in them no evil heart of unbelief. But even with respect to infants, Baptism is not administered unconditionally; it is upon condition that after regeneration they will do their part towards the continual renovation of that nature, in which the original 'infection remaineth, yea, even in them that are regene-

* Acts viii. 22.

† See Comber's Companion to the Temple, p. 189.

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rated,'* and to effect which the Holy Ghost is given to them; it is upon condition that as soon as they are capable of repentance and faith, they will repent and believe that the Church to which the power of the keys is confided, administers to infants that sacrament of Baptism, which is a plenary absolution with regard to the past, and the commencement of grace with reference to the future.

Previously to the administration of the sacrament, the sponsors of each child pledge themselves in the child's name, or rather the child through them pledges himself, to keep the terms of the Christian covenant. To this subject I shall return when I speak of the ordinance of Confirmation, proceeding now to the second part of the office, which relates to the administration of the sacrament itself.

This part of the office commences with certain short prayers in behalf of the person to be baptized, which are followed by a solemn appeal to God, 'whose most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, shed out of His most precious side both water and blood;' and a prayer to Him, in the name of the congregation, that He would 'sanctify this water,' the water then in the font. To what purpose? 'To the mystical washing away of sin;' and our God is entreated to grant, not only that this child, 'now to be baptized therein,' (that is, in the water sanctified 'to the mystical washing away of sin,') may receive the fulness of His grace at the time present, but also, (as the Church never forgets that he may fall finally from grace once given,) 'may ever

* Article IX.

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remain in the number of His faithful and elect children,'—that he may remain in the number of those among whom by Baptism he is placed. 'Then the Priest shall take the child in his hands, and shall say to the godfathers and godmothers, Name this child. And then naming it after them, if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it, shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily.' 'But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it, saying, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Then the Minister is directed to make a cross upon the child's forehead, 'in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue,' what he has now by Baptism been made, 'Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.'

Thus is the sacrament administered, either by immersion or affusion,—the Church leaving this to our discretion; and thus is the baptized person signed with the sign of the cross. 'When we receive any into the society of our religion,' says Dean Comber, 'it is certainly as lawful to declare it by words. And surely there is no character or signature so universally known to be the mark of a Christian as the sign of the cross, which St. Paul puts for the cross itself; because the belief of a crucified Saviour is the proper article of this faith, distinguishing Christians from Jews, Turks, and all kinds of religion in the world.'*

* Dean Comber. 1 Cor. i. 17, 18. Gal. v. 11. Phil. ii. 18.

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The Minister, after this, proceeding to the close of the service, is directed to say of every baptized child, without any exception, 'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits; and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.' This is done in the first instance by repeating the Lord's Prayer, that prayer which, being addressed to our Father which is in heaven, can only be properly used by those who are by Baptism made His children: and in the next place, by a thanksgiving prayer: 'We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant,' (the thanksgiving is used with reference to every baptized infant without exception,) 'that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit;' (not by water only, for water apart from the Spirit is useless; but by the Holy Spirit, who hath operated through the outward and visible sign:) 'that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy holy Church.' The thanksgiving then taking the form of prayer, and the Church being ever mindful that from grace we may fall finally, we humbly beseech God 'to grant that he,' (the baptized child,) 'being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, may' avail himself of his baptismal privileges and spiritual

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powers, and 'crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that as he is made partaker of the death of the Son of God,' (for 'know ye not,' saith St. Paul, 'that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?'*) 'that as he is made partaker of His death, he may be also partaker of His resurrection; so that finally, with the residue of God's holy Church, he may be an inheritor of the everlasting kingdom.'

The whole service concludes with a godly admonition to the godfathers and godmothers, impressing upon them the solemn engagements into which they have entered, and warning them of their consequent duties.

The prayer and thanksgiving to which I have called your special attention are used also in the Office for the Private Baptism of Children in Houses. With the exception of the Lord's Prayer, this is the only prayer especially enjoined. We are to use as many of the others 'as the time and present exigence will suffer;' but this thanksgiving prayer we must invariably use,—no option, no latitude is permitted. For every child that is baptized we must give hearty thanks to our most merciful Father that it hath pleased Him to regenerate this child with His Holy Spirit. It seems that the Church was providentially guided to insist upon this, lest any doubt should exist as to the fact, that every infant, whether baptized in the church or in a house, in public or in private, is in his Baptism regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

* Rom. vi. 3.

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This great doctrine, indeed, lies at the very foundation of Christianity; the amount of evil resulting from the fact, that some who profess and call themselves Christians are unbelievers in this eternal truth, is incalculable. How unequivocally it is asserted in our Baptismal Offices you have heard: and every clergyman, when, according to the technical term, he 'reads in,' declares 'his unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book entituled the Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Church of England, together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches; and the Form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.'

Therefore it would appear, that any one who denies the regeneration of all infants in holy Baptism, if he ministers in the Church of England, ventures publicly to declare his unfeigned assent and consent to that which in his heart he denies.

But it is notorious that some persons do officiate among us, that we do hear that asserted sometimes in the pulpit of the Church of England, which is in direct opposition to what the Church teaches in the Baptismal Office, and indeed in her every office: and, as we must not judge harshly of such persons, we must suppose that there is some non-natural sense in which they understand the Baptismal Office, which renders it possible for them to declare on the one hand

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their 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by' the Baptismal Office; while they venture to assail and malign, and represent as Papists, those who preach the doctrine of the Church, according to the plain, natural, simple, and Scriptural sense of the Prayer Book.

Let us consider, briefly, the manner in which some persons evade the plain sense of the Church. This is done in one of two ways: some admit that those who are regenerated, are regenerated in Baptism; but then they say, that of infants baptized, some are, but some are not, regenerated; so that in the Office of Baptism they return God thanks for that it hath pleased Him to regenerate with His Holy Spirit the infant just baptized; they declare of every infant, without exception, that he is regenerate; they admit that all children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved; and yet all the while they hold that the regeneration of the child, whose regeneration they pronounce as having occurred, and for whose regeneration they return God thanks, is nevertheless problematical!—it may or may not be, they only hope it is; and because they hope it, they pronounce it to be a fact. Surely, if ever there were a quibble upon words, if ever words were unfairly interpreted, and a non-natural sense put upon a whole office, of such offence these persons are guilty!—what ideas they can have of thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God, it is not easy to conceive.

Other persons meet the difficulty, which, indeed, if they did not seek to evade the doctrine of the Church,

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would be no difficulty, by denying that Baptism is at any time the means of regeneration to infants; although it is hard to understand how we can say of children not regenerated that they shall undoubtedly be saved: and then they go on gratuitously to assert, that provision is merely made in Baptism for the occurrence of regeneration at some future time, when the specified conditions of regeneration are fulfilled. And so they actually return God thanks for that it hath pleased Him to regenerate an infant just baptized, when they assert according to their heresy, that regeneration has not taken place, but only hope that it will take place hereafter. The equivocation here is so marvellous, it seems so nearly blasphemy to thank God for having done what we believe He has not done, that the conscience must be gradually hardened before recourse can be had to such a subterfuge as this.

Some are more bold: they deny the doctrine of the Church; and, to meet their own views, they alter the words of the Baptismal Office: but while by so doing they commit a sin, in that they have solemnly declared that they will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England; and betray consciousness of heresy, in that they make the Church yield to their judgment, instead of bending their judgment to the Church; still they do not escape the difficulty; for their unrevoked declaration must rise up in judgment against them, that 'to all and every thing contained in and prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer,' with reference to the administration of the sacraments, of which Baptism is one, 'they give their unfeigned assent and consent.'

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Were it otherwise, still they would find the doctrine haunting them in every office of the Church; for all the services of the Church are framed upon the principles that we become by Baptism a privileged race, and that by sin we may forfeit those privileges, that the Spirit of God may be taken from us, and that from grace we may finally fall even in our last hour.

In Holy Scripture we find the word regeneration used twice, and only twice. It is used by our Lord in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew, as descriptive of the new state of things which He had introduced,—the new dispensation generally: it is used in our text, where it undoubtedly means Baptism, which the Apostle calls the 'washing of regeneration.' We have referred before to the third chapter of St. John, where our Lord declares, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' But though the word is not of frequent occurrence in Scripture, the thing which the word implies is very often alluded to. The Church says, that by Baptism we are incorporated into the body of Christ, and so made members of Him who is the mystical head of the body; and for saying this we have the authority of St. Paul, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.'* The Church teaches that Baptism confers remission of sins: 'Arise,' said Ananias to St. Paul, 'arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.'† 'Repent, and be baptized,' said St. Peter to the Jews, 'every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the

* 1 Cor. xii. 13. † Acts xxii. 16.

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remission of sins.'* The Church teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit first comes to the soul through the instrumentality of Baptism, and saith St. Peter, 'Be baptized, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.' 'We,' saith St. Paul, 'being baptized into one body, have been made all to drink of one Spirit.'† The body is the body of Christ, and we then, having been by Baptism admitted into the mystical body, have partaken of that Spirit by which the body, in conjunction with the head, is animated. The Church teaches that in Baptism we are made children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. 'Ye are all,' saith St. Paul, 'the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.'‡ And, 'if children,' he remarks in the epistle to the Romans, 'then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'§ It is on this principle that the Apostles, in their Epistles, uniformly address the whole body of believers as privileged persons, persons under grace: those who have not been by Baptism engrafted into the mystical body, are addressed as 'aliens,' 'strangers,' 'foreigners;' but those who are baptized are saluted as 'fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' and 'joint-heirs with Christ,' of 'an eternal inheritance.'‖ The Epistles are addressed to men who, having been regenerated, because baptized, possessed the ability, through the grace that was in them, to do

* Acts ii. 38. † 1 Cor. xii. 13.
‡ Gal. iii. 26, 27. § Rom. vi. 17.
‖ Eph. ii. 12, 19. Gal. iii. 26. 1 St. John iii. 1. Rom. viii. 17. Hebrews ix. 15.

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what God directed them to do. To Christians there are no exhortations with reference to regeneration; but the exhortations are innumerable by which they are called upon to be spiritually renewed; they are exhorted to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. 'Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.'* The inward man is said to be renewed day by day. When Christians have once fallen off, their restoration is called, not regenerating, but renewing them to repentance. We have no power to regenerate ourselves; this is the work of God alone; but being regenerated, we are required to co-operate with the Spirit of God in our renovation. Regeneration is a mystical change in our condition in the sight of God: renovation is a change of conduct. Regeneration is the commencement, and renovation the progress or consummation of our spiritual life. Renovation is the fulfilment on our part, through the grace of the Spirit imparted to us at Baptism, of those conditions upon which regeneration took place. Regeneration is an object of faith only; we perceive no immediate effects resulting from it; it is a mystery; we believe that a blessing is conferred, though we see it not, though we feel it not, because on the due application of the means God has promised it: but renovation is visible; we are conscious of the change when we are converted or renewed, and the alteration in our conduct is apparent to others. Regeneration is the initiatory operation of grace upon the soul: renovation the gradual change of our inward frame and disposition.

* Eph. iv. 23.

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From this you may perceive in part the distinction which is to be made between regeneration and renovation and conversion; you perceive why, after thanking God for the regeneration of an infant, the Church addresses the sponsors, in order to secure, as far as possible, the due use of the grace thus given; you see why we should always pray in the spirit of the Collect for Christmas day, that being regenerate, we may be daily renewed by the Holy Ghost.

The practical importance of this great truth is at once apparent, when we have regard to the education of our children. How different must be the training of that child, whom we address as a Christian child, and warn that he has had a gift conferred upon him which he may lose; but which, by endeavouring to do his duty in that station of life in which he is placed, he will retain to his great and endless comfort; from the education of that other child, which is told that it can do nothing that is good, until it has received a special call from God! How different the training of a child taught to regard itself as a Christian, and under grace, from the education of that other child, who is instructed to regard itself as little better than a heathen!

And observe, too, the difference which this doctrine must occasion in the nature of our addresses from the pulpit. Our doctrine being that of the Apostles, the character of our addresses must be the same as theirs. Were I addressing, not a baptized people, but a congregation of Jews or heathens, I should have to tell them of their lost and perishing condition, in conse-

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quence, not only of their actual sins, but of original sin,—a state from which they could not extricate themselves; I should have to tell them that, born under a curse, under that curse they must remain, under its sentence die, unless they could obtain part in the everlasting covenant between God the Father and His eternal Son; I should have to excite in them a desire to partake of this covenant, and then to tell them of Baptism, the appointed instrument through which men are grafted into Christ; I should have to speak to them of repentance and faith, the conditions without which Baptism may not be administered to adults; I should have to tell them of preventing grace, that grace which goes before man in every good thought and work: and on their telling me that faith and repentance exist within them, I should conclude that there was sufficient evidence that God willed their election, and should administer to them the sacrament of Baptism.

But how different is the mode of my address, when I am appointed to speak unto you, my beloved brethren, who were long since admitted into the fold of Christ, the great Shepherd of our souls. Born in sin, and under sentence of condemnation, you were baptized in your infancy, and at that time translated, by God's free unmerited mercy, from a state of nature in which you could have had no title to the privileges of the Gospel, into a state of salvation, wherein is promised to you pardon and peace and everlasting life, if you lead a life of repentance and faith: you were then made members of that family, that holy society, which Christ hath

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separated from the world; the guilt of your original sin was washed away, although the infection remaineth still; the merits of that atonement which Christ has effected for the sins of the world, were then applied to your souls; you were once, and once for all, regenerated; the seed of grace was sown in your souls.

But does it follow that because seed is sown, it must of necessity be productive? Grace is given to profit withal; if care be not taken that grace shall be renewed by frequent recourse to the means of grace, and grace preserved by the cultivation of godliness, the grace once given will be given in vain. It is because the grace given in Baptism is so often unproductive, that men become sceptical as to the donation of grace at all in the sacrament of Baptism. They argue that, when grace produces no fruit, it is a proof that it was never conferred. It is asked, why is it conferred, if it is never to be used? We answer by asking why so many hundreds of infants are born into the world who live not for a single hour? They breathe for an hour and then die: we cannot give any reason why, at the peril of a mother's life, a human being should come into this world barely to breathe and then to depart from it: but because its life is apparently useless, are we to contend that life was never conferred upon it?

Seed, we know, is often sown, and is unproductive. It has frequently happened that whole woods in America have been consumed by fire. After a little while, a new crop of trees is seen to spring up, of a species entirely distinct from that which has been consumed. Of this crop the seeds were buried in the

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earth, though by some counteracting external circumstances their vegetation was prevented. The counteracting circumstances being removed, and the increased temperature caused by the conflagration forming a natural hot-bed, they spring up. Precisely so it is with the grace given in Baptism. That grace being duly cultivated by the prayers and holy training of parents and sponsors, and afterwards by the baptized person himself, is productive of a godly life; but if neglected, uncultivated, kept down by the counteraction of indolence or vice, it lies dormant: but remove the counteracting forces, let vicious habits be broken, let the soul be watered by the tears of repentance and warmed by faith, and the grace will even yet become productive, twenty, thirty, or even an hundred fold.

How constantly, then, my brethren, can we call upon you to be converted and renewed; if you will do your part, God is with you; He is in you, and will do His part in the covenant which He has made with your soul. Turn yourselves to Him, and you shall be turned by Him; if you will draw nigh unto God, God will draw nigh unto you; you can draw nigh to God; He has conferred upon you the ability to do so in your Baptism; and, therefore, when we address any of you who are not converted, we may ask you, why will you die? If yours be a spiritual death, the fault is your own: you can, any one of you can, be saved if you will; you can arise and amend your lives if you will. To call upon baptized Christians to be regenerated is incorrect language, and worse than incorrect, because it leads them to forget the power given them in Bap-

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tism; but to call upon them to be converted, to turn themselves unto the Lord, that the Lord may turn their hearts, and so renew them by the Holy Ghost, this is language both correct and intelligible. Are there any persons here who have brought reproach upon that name which they in baptism received? who have rebelled against that God and Father, that Lord and Saviour, that Holy Spirit and Sanctifier, to whose service they once were consecrated in Baptism? Are there any who view the cross of Christ with indifference, disregarding their interest in it, or doubting its efficacy, —doing despite to that Spirit which took possession of their souls at Baptism, and expelling Him from that temple in which He seeks to dwell and to shed His grace, His consolations, and His joys? Are there any who are rejecting, for the transitory, corrupting, unsatisfying, perishing pleasures of sin, their inheritance in heaven, the crown of glory, the bliss of immortality, the joys of God's presence, the beatific vision? Oh! repent, confess with deep sorrow your base ingratitude and guilt; renounce your sins; return to God relying on the merits of His Son; pray to Him for the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, to transform your affections, to abolish the body of sin which enslaves you, to endow you with heavenly graces, and to advance you in all virtue and godliness of living. Repent, that you may be converted; or you will sink into worse condemnation than even the heathen, who though he too has violated every dictate of reason, every remonstrance of conscience, and every secret monition of God's Spirit, never sinned against covenanted grace, never trampled

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under foot the Son of God, never despised the blood of the covenant, never spurned from him a title to heaven.

If this be a warning which in consistency with the Scriptural doctrine of regeneration we are called upon to give to such as are falling from grace, let us turn, at the same time, to speak words of comfort to those timid spirits who are neglecting to use the grace which is accorded to them from distrust of the mercy of God. Remember, my brethren, you who are not living in any habitual or deadly sin, that you are to walk, not by your feelings, but by faith. Believe that God has adopted you as His children: it is a fact that He has so done; and then take comfort to your souls by considering what an affectionate father, perfect in love, would do as regards his child upon earth. As such a father would act by his child, so will God act by your soul. Would such a parent be extreme to mark what is done amiss? Would he not love the child who, though often culpable, still wishes to please him? Even suppose the child to offend so as to deserve punishment, the infliction of punishment would be no proof of the withdrawal of the parent's love, but the very reverse; the proof of a father's not caring for us is, that we are 'without chastisement.' It is not for every little offence that a father turns his child out of his house; neither will our heavenly Father so do. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons;

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for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?'* If with all your shortcomings and downfallings, you are honestly endeavouring as dutiful children to serve a kind and merciful Father, you are still objects of his care; and there is one at his right hand who is to us our All in All, our elder brother, Jesus Christ the righteous, to be your advocate and to plead your cause. Fear not then, ye who are true of heart, but have filial confidence in your heavenly Father. Be sure He loves you, even while He chastens you. Approach Him with reverential boldness; cast out servile fear: you are not a slave but a child; tell your heavenly Father of your faults; tell Him of your difficulties; tell Him your desires; open your whole heart and soul to Him; for as you love the prattling of your little ones, so does your Father which is in heaven, He who permits you, awful as He is in Himself, to approach with the word, Abba, Father, on your lips, delight to hear the prayers and supplications of those who are in Christ one with Himself. To distrust Him is sin. Tell Him all you desire in prayer; serve Him by doing with all your might what your hand findeth to do; do homage to Him as your King as well as your Father, your paternal sovereign in the high services of his sanctuary; and with confidence draw nigh to Him when He spreads his feast before you on his holy table,—where He who was given to die for your sins, is offered to you as your spiritual food and sustenance.

* Heb. xii. 6, 7.

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SERMON XVI.

ON CONFIRMATION.

'*The doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands.*'—Heb. vi. 2.

THAT the Church has power to appoint ordinances, will, I suppose, be generally admitted: and it is with reference not only to judicial but also to devotional acts, that our Lord's promise, as recorded in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, was delivered, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.'

An ordinance is appointed to be a means of grace: if our Lord ratifies in heaven what His Church does upon earth, then to expect the grace which an ordinance is appointed to convey is religion: if, on the other hand, by proper authority in the Church, an ordinance is abolished, still to observe it is an act of superstition.

For a member of the Church of England to expect grace from such an ordinance as Extreme Unction would be superstition; it was once, that is, before the Reformation, an ordinance of our Church; but from that ordinance they who have authority in the English

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Church have loosed us: and their act on earth is ratified in heaven: we should act in a Judaizing spirit if we were to seek benefit from it. But Confirmation is still an ordinance of the English Church: it is, as it always has been, the ordinance appointed to convey to the souls of the baptized strengthening grace. Strengthening grace is the inward and spiritual gift, the imposition of hands the outward and visible sign.

It is an ordinance which was appointed in the Church at a very early period; you have heard in our text how it was regarded by the Apostle to the Hebrews, as connected with the principles of the doctrine of Christ,—how it is placed in juxtaposition to Baptism. Bishop Taylor, indeed, argues from this circumstance, that it must have a divine institution, or otherwise St. Paul would scarcely have mentioned it as among the doctrines of Christianity.*

As we know that at first it was administered immediately after Baptism, at all events in the case of adults, there can be no doubt that it is to this ordinance that reference is made in our text. It was, undoubtedly, an ordinance observed by the Apostles; for in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read, that when the Apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, and were baptized, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed, and laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. This is an exact description of what

* 'Episcopacy Asserted,' sect. viii. Taylor's Works (Heber), vol. vii. p. 25.

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takes place at Confirmation. Philip, a deacon, baptized the Samaritans: after this, two chief pastors went down to lay hands upon, or, as we say, to confirm them; and God the Holy Ghost, by visibly descending upon the persons confirmed, by that very act declared that our Lord's promise was fulfilled; and what was done by the Church on earth, in instituting this ordinance, was ratified in heaven.

In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, we find that St. Paul, having met twelve disciples at Ephesus, who had been baptized with John's Baptism, first caused them to be baptized with Christ's Baptism—that Baptism in which the Holy Ghost regenerates the baptized—and then laid his hands on them, i.e. confirmed them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

These facts throw light upon the words of our text. It is certainly true that the ceremony of Laying on of Hands was and is observed on other occasions; in the ordination of the clergy, for instance; in consecrating the elements in the Lord's Supper; and, anciently, whenever a benediction was given, as in the Visitation of the Sick or the Absolution of Penitents. But the Apostle here speaks of what concerns not merely persons in certain conditions, but every member of the Church,—what concerns them all, as does Baptism. In the laying on of hands in ordination, the clergy only are concerned; in laying on of hands when the sick are blessed, the sick only are concerned; in absolving penitents, those only who are under the censures of the Church. It remains therefore that, without excluding these, the Apostle refers to the other

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office, in which the same ceremony was observed, namely, Confirmation. So strong, indeed, is this passage to our purpose, that Calvin himself is compelled to own 'that this one place doth abundantly witness that the original rite was from the Apostles.'

The Laying on of Hands was, indeed, in the Apostles' time, attended by miraculous gifts. But so also were their preaching and their prayers: miracles were wrought by the Holy Ghost, in the first instance, to give a divine sanction to the ordinances of the Church; and to prove that He could and would, according to our Lord's promise, be really and indeed present with the Ministers of God in all their ministrations; that He would supply the inward and spiritual grace, when penitent and faithful hearts had recourse to the outward and visible sign: and when enough was done to establish this point, miracles gradually ceased. From what the Apostle says, in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, it does not appear that all were endowed with miraculous powers. And if the cessation of miracles is no proof that preaching and praying are unnecessary, it can be no proof that the Church is wrong in continuing the ordinance of Confirmation, or the Laying on of Hands.

From their days to ours, through all generations of the Church, this ordinance has continued. The early Church inherited it from the Apostles. In allusion to a passage I have already quoted, St. Cyprian remarks, 'The same thing that was done by Peter and John, is still done among us. They who are baptized are

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brought to the rulers of the Church, that, by prayer and the laying on of hands, they may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the seal of Baptism.' Tertullian, who flourished about eighty years after the Apostle St. John, observes, that it was the 'practice of the Church, after Baptism, to lay on hands, by blessing and prayer inviting the Holy Spirit, who graciously descends from the Father, on bodies cleansed and blessed by Baptism.'

By the early Christians, indeed, as Baptism was called the enlightening, so Confirmation was styled the sealing of Christians: hence, when the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, speaking of Christ, saith, 'In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,'* i.e. the promised Spirit, he was always considered to be speaking in reference to Confirmation. To which he most probably refers also, in the words, 'Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.'†

Perhaps the word 'sealing' refers to the practice of anointing the person to be confirmed with an unguent or chrism, made of oil and balsam, and hallowed by the prayers of the Bishop: we know, from the best authorities, that this practice prevailed at the end of the second or the beginning of the third century, and that it was intended to signify the grace of the Holy Spirit, then conferred by the laying on of hands; and

* Eph. xiii. 1. † 2 Cor. i. 21.

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as it is impossible to state when a practice so early and universally prevailing was introduced, we may suppose that it was an apostolical observance, and, as such, alluded to in the passages I have just quoted.

Before the Reformation, besides laying his hands on the person confirmed, the Bishop also signed him with the sign of the cross, as we still do to those who have been baptized. Indeed, after the Reformation, in the first Book of Edward VI., the rubric directs, that 'the Bishop shall cross them on the forehead, and lay his hands on their head, saying, I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and lay my hand upon thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

Now, these ancient observances were only of value when they formed part of an ordinance appointed by the Church. When they were thus ordained, it was religious to observe them, and, through the observance of them, to seek grace. But the Church, having authority to loose as well as to bind, thought proper, for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter at present, to discontinue these ceremonies, and to make the imposition of hands, with prayer, the only outward and visible sign in this ordinance. On the principle already advanced, since the Church of England is our authority, it would be superstition on our part, were we to regard these observances as any longer essential; while, if the Church were, in some future Convocation, to bind us to them again, it would then become irreligion to disregard them.

It is on the same principle that we justify another

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deviation from ancient practice, a deviation in which the Church of England shares with all the Western Churches. The ancient practice was to administer Confirmation, when practicable, immediately after Baptism. At first, the persons baptized were generally adults, and, before receiving the sacrament of Baptism, they underwent, as catechumens, a long course of training: if they were prepared for Baptism, they were, of course, prepared for Confirmation, and they sought for strengthening grace immediately after receiving the grace of regeneration. Regarding the office in its most important light, as a means of grace, they made no alteration in their practice as it related to infants; but as the Church increased in extent, it became necessary either to defer Confirmation until the Bishop was able to give his attendance, or else to give to Presbyters a power to confirm. The latter course was adopted in the Eastern Churches, in which the Presbyters have authority to confirm, and in which, consequently, Confirmation is still administered, even to infants, immediately after Baptism; whereas, in the Western Churches, including our own, the authority to confirm was reserved to the Bishops, which implied a delay as to its administration.*

The principle admitted, that Confirmation might be delayed, regard was had to edification, and it was delayed until persons baptized in infancy were able to take upon themselves the vows and promises made in their name at Baptism. This is stated in what is

* Palmer, Orig. Lit.

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called the Preface to Confirmation, which was inserted as a rubric in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., and so continued till the last review, when it was directed to be read by the Bishop, or some other Minister appointed by him: 'To the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order that none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can also answer such other questions as in the short Catechism are contained: which order is very convenient to be observed, to the end that children, being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.' Then the Bishop asks them, 'Do ye here, in the presence of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your names at Baptism; ratifying the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and do all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?' And every one is expected audibly to answer, 'I do.' The Bishop then proceeds to administer the ordinance.

It is said at the end of the office for 'Public Baptism of such as are of Riper Years,' that 'it is ex-

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pedient that every person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop, so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be.' The preface and prefatory question of the Bishop are not strictly applicable to these; but as the majority of persons to be confirmed in every congregation must consist of those who have been baptized in their infancy, no practical inconvenience is found to arise from this.

Not only for edification of mind, but for renovation of soul, does it seem expedient thus to defer the Confirmation of those who have been regenerated in infancy. The persons to be confirmed are generally those who are just commencing the career of life, just passing from parental control; going forth into that world, which is to the Christian a field of battle, wherein, under the great Captain of his salvation, he is to fight the good fight of faith, against the world, the flesh, and the devil. There, many an ambush is laid for their destruction, unless their eyes be opened by grace to perceive the pitfall: within are passions, at that age in their vigour, ready to betray them; and the temptations which allure them from without assail their inexperience with more of fascination or of power than at any other period of life. Now, more, therefore, than at any other period of life, they stand in need of that strengthening grace which this ordinance has been instituted to convey. Now do they need to take unto themselves the whole armour of God,—the breastplate of salvation, the sword of the Spirit. This, indeed, is the idea of Confirmation. It is the arming of the young Christian against the wiles of

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Satan; it is the strengthening of the feeble hands; the sending forth of him who has already been sworn in when he was baptized: he does not at Confirmation make new vows; he only, before receiving the grace which he seeks, repeats the vows which are already upon him.

A person baptized in infancy may say that those vows were not made voluntarily; that as the option of taking or of refusing them was not left to him, he therefore does not feel bound by them.

Be it so: then, we reply, you may be released, as you think, from your vows; but the consequence is, you cannot exercise the slightest Christian privilege. Whenever you exercise a Christian privilege, you virtually renew your baptismal vows, since it is only to baptized persons, that is to persons bound by such vows, that these privileges are vouchsafed. If you refuse to renew your vows, you, in effect, place yourselves among the unbaptized; by so doing, you are in a state of nature; by nature you are a child of wrath, and a child of wrath is an inheritor of perdition. But though I say this, I speak of an impossibility; you cannot wash away your Baptism; and therefore, if you count it an unholy thing, and refuse to adhere to the baptismal vows, you will have to answer for much more than the mere heathen,—you have to render an account for having rejected and done despite unto the Spirit of your God.

With reference to those who on this ground refuse to come to Confirmation, we say, that you would be bound by your baptismal vows, even if you did not

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come to Confirmation, or else you would forfeit your baptismal privileges: the vows imply the existence of spiritual privileges, and the spiritual privileges imply the existence of the vows. But what the Church requires is, that, preparatory to our receiving the Holy Communion, we shall, at Confirmation, renew these vows in a marked and solemn manner, so that you shall never forget that such vows are upon you.

The object of Confirmation is to confer strengthening grace, through the imposition of hands, upon those who have received regenerating grace through the waters of Baptism, which are consecrated, as the Prayer Book teaches us, 'for the mystical washing away of sins;' the Holy Spirit being, in either case, the agent by whom, through the appointed means, the grace is conferred. And when it is for more strength that we ask, it seems reasonable to demand upon our part a public renewal of vows. We say, 'We are the servants and soldiers of Jesus Christ; the enemy is attacking us; we require new strength, and desire to put on the whole armour of God, that we may resist the world, the flesh, and the devil: grant us, O Lord, Thou great Captain of our salvation, the strength we need, through Thy appointed ordinance, that in Thy strength we may go forth conquering and to conquer:' and the answer to your supplication is, 'According to your faith, so be it unto you; but first, ye servants and soldiers of Jesus Christ, give proof of your sincerity by the renewal of your oath of allegiance and loyalty to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.'

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Such and so important is the ordinance of which I am speaking; such and so important, administered as it now is, as a means of edification: but while we insist upon this, we must not, as too many do, forget the primary object of this ordinance, the object to which all others are subordinate,—which is its being the means of conveying supernatural grace to the soul.

Some persons are afraid to regard it in this, the true Scriptural light, because they are afraid lest it should be accounted a Sacrament. Now, let those who are on this account afraid even to investigate the truth, ask their hearts whether the truth be really the object they have in view, or whether they be not merely under the influence of party and controversial feelings. The Church of Rome speaks of seven Sacraments: the Church of Rome must be opposed, and anything that appears to make more Sacraments than two must be resisted. This is often the debasing feeling of unenlightened controversialists. Why do we oppose the Church of Rome when she speaks of seven Sacraments? Take heed lest, in fearing to speak of Confirmation as you ought to do, you betray your ignorance of what a Sacrament is. To this point I must briefly advert.

And, first, of the word Sacrament itself, it is not a Scriptural but an ecclesiastical term; a word adopted by the Church, and for the meaning of which, therefore, we must go to the Church. And I will now read to you what the Church of England says upon this subject in the Homily of Common Prayer and the Sacraments: 'You shall hear how many Sacraments

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there be, that were instituted by our Saviour Christ, and are to be continued and received of every Christian in due time and order, and for such purposes as our Saviour Christ willed them to be received. And as for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a Sacrament, namely, for visible signs expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness and joining in Christ, there be but two, namely, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. For although Absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sins; yet, by the express word of the New Testament, it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign, which is, imposition of hands. For this visible sign (I mean, laying on of hands) is not expressly commanded in the New Testament to be used in Absolution, as the visible signs in Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are; and therefore Absolution is no such Sacrament as Baptism and the Communion are. But, in a general acceptation, the name of a Sacrament may be attributed to anything whereby a holy thing is signified. In which understanding of the word, the ancient writers have given this name, not only to the other five, commonly of late years taken and used for supplying the number of seven Sacraments; but also to divers and sundry other ceremonies, as to oil, washing of feet, and such like: not meaning thereby to repute them as Sacraments, in the signification that the two fore-named Sacraments are. And therefore St. Augustine, weighing

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the true signification and exact meaning of the word, writing to Januarius, and also in the third Book of Christian Doctrine, affirmeth, that the Sacraments of Christians, as they are most excellent in signification, so are they most few in number; and in both places maketh mention expressly of two, the Sacrament of Baptism, and Supper of the Lord. And although there are retained by the order of the Church of England, besides these two, certain other rites and ceremonies about the Institution of Ministers in the Church, Matrimony, Confirmation of Children, by examining them of their knowledge in the articles of the faith, and joining thereto the Prayers of the Church for them, and likewise for the Visitation of the Sick; yet no man ought to take these for Sacraments in such signification or meaning as the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are.'

This is a long, but it is an important passage. In the first place, you see, the question relating to the number of the Sacraments is not a mere dispute about words. Our wise Reformers would have yielded at once, had such been the case, for the sake of peace. There is indeed a sense in which many other ordinances may be called Sacraments; and so far from denying this, our Church, in the Homily on Swearing, speaks of the Sacrament of Matrimony. In this sense the terms ought not to be confined to those five other rites to which it is applied by Romanists, but to any ordinance having an emblematical action of sacred import—any rite whatever, having an internal or secret meaning. So long as you make a marked distinction

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between all these ordinances, and Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, there will be no quarrel about names.

Now I bring this before you, that you may see clearly the intention of the Church. Its object was, and is, not to depreciate other ordinances, but to elevate these two. If you regard the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion as merely solemn and edifying ceremonies—as too often is the case now-a-days—you must be surprised at hearing of any dispute upon this point. If such were simply the case, it must be clear to you, from the passage I have read, that our Church would have entered into no controversy on the subject. Other ordinances are solemn and edifying; such is the ordinance of preaching, such is the ordinance of public worship, such is that ordinance of which we are now treating, Confirmation: but these are not to be called Sacraments in any such sense as Baptism and Supper of the Lord.

The two Sacraments of Baptism and Supper of the Lord are, then, something more than edifying and solemn ceremonies. And they are not distinguished from other ordinances merely by the fact of their being means of conveying grace to persons qualified to receive it: for other ordinances are also means of grace; such as Prayer, Confirmation, Fasting. Orders and Matrimony also convey to their respective recipients the grace for which they have recourse to those rites.

The distinction, then, between Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as contrasted with all other ordinances, is this, that they convey a grace peculiar to themselves.

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And what is this? Let us revert to the Homily of our Church, and there we learn that in these two, the promise of forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness and joining in Christ, is annexed to the visible signs. Other ordinances may confer grace, but Baptism and the Eucharist alone unite with Christ Himself. 'By Baptism,' says a great divine, 'we receive Christ Jesus, and from Him the saving grace which is proper to Baptism: by the Eucharist we receive Him also, imparting Himself and that grace which the Eucharist probably bestows.' Or let me quote a passage from the most learned Dr. Waterland, rather scholastic, but very expressive of my meaning. 'In Baptism and the Eucharist,' he says, 'we are made and continue members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones: our union with the Deity rests entirely on our mystical union with our Lord's humanity, which is personally united with his Divine nature, which is essentially united with God the Father, the head and fountain of all. So stands the economy which shows the high importance of the doctrine. And it is well that Romanists, and Lutherans, and Greeks also, even the East and West, have preserved, and continue to preserve it, though some of them have miserably corrupted it by the wood, hay, stubble, which they have built upon it.'*

You will now perceive that we are to distinguish between Baptism and the Lord's Supper on the one hand, and the various ordinances of the Church on

* Works, vii. 28.

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the other, not by depreciating the ordinances, but by thinking of these two great Sacraments of the Gospel, as the Gospel 'rightly understood' would teach us to think of them. If we believe, as the Church unequivocally teaches, that in Baptism is the laver of regeneration, that in the Lord's Supper the inward part or thing signified is the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper, we at once perceive why these ordinances should be distinguished as different in kind from all others. But let Baptism and the Lord's Supper be regarded, as is too often the case in these days, merely as important ceremonies; and the dispute between us and the Romanists on the subject of the seven Sacraments, is a mere dispute about words.

Returning now to the office of Confirmation; of the order, little need be said. It consists of three parts: the first, the preparation for Confirmation, contains a serious admonition in the preface, with a solemn stipulation in the interrogation and answer, to which I have before alluded; together with the first prayer, which is a supplication for spiritual gifts to the Almighty and Everlasting God, who hath vouchsafed to regenerate those about to be confirmed, by water and the Holy Ghost.

The second part consists of the rite itself, the laying on of hands, and the solemn benediction.

The third or concluding part, consists of general petitions, in the versicles, responses, and the Lord's Prayer; in petitions more peculiar to the occasion,

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contained in the two last collects; and of the final blessing.

Such is the office of Confirmation; and is it not with a melancholy feeling that we come to the consideration of it? We have periodically to consider this ordinance with reference to those who are preparing to receive it. But it has come this day under our notice, merely as a holy rite; and our interest in it is entirely retrospective. Years have passed since the hand of our Bishop, in Confirmation, rested upon our heads—to some of us, many years. Parents, sponsors; they whose hearts once beat in tender anxiety for us, as ours perhaps are throbbing now, at the thought of all the trials, temptations, and difficulties awaiting our own dear children and godchildren; where are they? Their once familiar faces beaming with that generous unselfish love, that kind of love which none other can feel for us, seem to appear before us; but, with respect to most of them, they have gone the way of all flesh; not lost, but gone before us. Whether in the Church triumphant they are cognizant of what passes here below, is doubtful: we can scarcely suppose it; for if they were witnesses of our struggles, they could hardly be at rest; and 'blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.'* But it is probable, that from time to time, as they are uniting with us in the prayer that it may please the Lord of His gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom;

* Rev. xiv. 13.

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their righteous hearts may be cheered by the joyful intelligence of our progress in holiness, our advance in grace. Surrounded as we are by angels and invisible spirits, who are ministering to the heirs of salvation; incessant as the intercourse is between the visible and the invisible Church, this seems more than probable, and certainly has ever been a pious opinion in the Church. And while we think of dear ones loved, and now seen no more, can we venture to hope that their spirits have been thus cheered, by such intelligence of our conversion, of that renewal of our nature, by the co-operation of God's Spirit with our own self-discipline, which is fitting us for the mansions purchased for those who persevere unto the end, by the cross and passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Let us this day deal honestly with our souls. Let us devote some additional time this night, ere we retire to rest, to self-examination; let us attend to the verdict which our consciences shall return. There was a period in our lives in which our Bishop asked us, 'Do ye here in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at Baptism?' the promise and vow that you should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; that you should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and that you should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life. There was a time, when to this solemn question we

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each one of us answered, 'I do.' And to your conscience, and to mine, my brethren, I now, in the name of the living God, put the question: Have you kept the promise, or, are we found liars? Conscience, each man's conscience, I ask the verdict of thee? Dying men, ye are nearer the grave, that is, nearer to heaven or to hell, than you were when this promise was made; God is not to be trifled with. Oh! dreadful thought! Whose,—whose is the conscience that does not upbraid him? Who, and where is he that would not be driven to despair, if he had not a Saviour, or if he had a Saviour less than Almighty? Oh! the comfort of knowing that, when the heart is right, when there is a willing mind to do the duty of our station in life, because that station indicates the call of God to each individual, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and that through Him, through the strengthening of His Spirit, we can do all things.

But is there any careless one among us, any whose heart has not been converted by the grace of God's Holy Spirit; and who, in asking the question proposed, feels that he has not only not kept his promise and vow, but not endeavoured, not even desired, after the first impression passed away, to do so? Why has that person been brought here? He has been brought here by God's providence to hear God's minister, in the name of God, say to him as I now do, 'Turn ye, turn ye; why will you die?' If you will turn this day unto the Lord, He will turn unto you, and by turning unto you, convert your heart by the

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grace of His Holy Spirit. Turn to Him, as you only can turn, by renewing your solemn vow and promise of obedience. Will you solemnly, seriously do this, counting the cost, the many indulgences you will have to give up, the persecutions you will have to endure, the mortifications to which you must submit? Will you do this? Will you cut off the right hand of sin, or pluck out the right eye of sin, if need shall be? Will you determine to become religious, considering well what such a vow implies in all but the hypocrite? Then happy will be this consideration of the order of Confirmation to you; for the Fatherly hand of God will ever be over you; His Holy Spirit will ever be with you, and so lead you in the knowledge and obedience of His Word, that in the end you shall obtain everlasting life. God of His mercy grant that thus it may be with us all!

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SERMON XVII.*

'*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a Spiritual House, an Holy Priesthood, to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*'—1 St. Peter ii. 5.

By those who believe in the fundamental verities of the Christian religion, the act of solemn worship which is about to take place, in the celebration, for the first time in this Sanctuary, of the Holy Eucharist, will be regarded as a deed far more sacred, and far more important than the ceremony of Wednesday last.

For the first time, the peculiar act of Christian worship is here to be performed. Heathens may pray, and worldlings may hear; but Christians, and true Christians only, can partake of these holy mysteries. What to them is a mystery, a sacrament, and a sacrifice, is to others only a ceremony, which they are guilty by their presence of profaning.

If, then, I were to regard only the circumstances to which I have alluded, a discourse upon the Holy Eucharist would be appropriate on this occasion; but it becomes more so, when I am informed by that beloved Pastor, whom God in His mercy has sent to minister among you, that there are several here present, who

* [Preached at Birch Church, July 5, 1846: being the Sunday after the consecration.]

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having lately received the grace of Confirmation, will communicate this day for the first time. My young friends, may the good God be with you, now, and ever: may you continue to be regular and frequent communicants, and learn so to depend upon God as to seek every week that grace, for the want of which so many souls are languishing among us.

Let me place before you this blessed ordinance as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice:—God the Blessed Spirit be with me, to send my words to the hearts of the converted, that they may receive edification; and may He restrain the unconverted, the Pharisee, or the Sadducee, if such be present, from profanation and blasphemy: yea, rather may He graciously hear our prayers this day, and turn their hearts unto the Lord.

In a Sacrament God gives something to us: by a Sacrifice we give something to God.

Let us, then, first consider what God gives to us in the Holy Communion.

It was at that solemn hour, when our God Incarnate was preparing to offer Himself an atonement for the sins of the world upon the cross, that He, even the Lord Jesus Christ, instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And when He took the bread and brake it, He said, 'Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you:' and so of the cup, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.'

Now, it cannot fail to strike you, that these words addressed without explanation to the Apostles at the institution of the Lord's Supper, needed an explanation;

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and doubtless would have received one, had not a previous discourse, which our Lord had held with these same Apostles, been sufficient for the purpose. I allude to the discourse of our Lord, recorded in the 6th chapter of St. John's Gospel.

There our Lord declares, that there is sustenance provided for the immortal soul as well as for the mortal body, or rather for the whole immortal man; and that He, the Son of Man, had, in this His character of the Messiah, power to supply us with it, as He was sealed or appointed by God the Father for that purpose.* After some colloquy with the unbelieving Jews, we find our blessed Lord advancing a step, and not only asserting that there is food of an eternal maintenance provided by Him, but affirming that 'the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.' Not only had Christ this Bread, this spiritual sustenance to give, but that spiritual sustenance was His very Self; and this He more distinctly says directly afterwards, 'I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to me,' hungering after that Bread, 'shall never hunger,' his hunger shall be appeased; 'and he that believeth in me,' believeth that I am this spiritual sustenance, 'shall never thirst.' It is not meant, of course, that the disciples of Christ should have no appetite for this spiritual food; what is meant is, that coming unto Christ as their sustenance, their hunger and thirst should be appeased, and of hunger and thirst they should not die.

* St. John vi. 27.

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It seemed strange to the Jews that the Man of Sorrows, rejected and despised, who stood before them should speak thus, and, like infidels in other ages, who condemn before they ascertain the purport of a mystery, they murmured. 'The Jews murmured at him,' as infidels still murmur at the Church, 'because he said, I am the Bread which came down from Heaven; and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know, how is it then that he saith I came down from Heaven?' But our Lord did not vouchsafe to explain Himself further to those who were perversely blind, whose hearts were hardened; He merely repeated His assertion, 'I am that Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna,' which was only a type of this, the true Bread that cometh down from Heaven, 'and are dead. This,' alluding to Himself, 'is the Bread that cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof' (or rather feed thereupon, for the original refers to a continuous act), 'and not die.' And then, without explaining, advancing further in the revelation of His will, our Lord proceeds: 'I am the living,' or life-giving, 'Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man shall eat of,' or feed upon, 'this Bread, he shall live for ever. And the Bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

The Jews again strove among themselves. Like infidels of a later age, instead of seeking to ascertain where so great a blessing was promised, how they might obtain it, they perplexed themselves with a very inferior question, as to how the thing promised could

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be accomplished. The Jews strove among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' To satisfy a profane curiosity, suggested merely by the intellect and not proceeding from a heart desirous to know and do what is right—this was never our Lord's purpose. Our blessed Lord therefore only reiterated His assertion in terms yet stronger and more unequivocal. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat,' or feed upon, 'the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood,' or make His blood your drink, 'ye have no life,' no spiritual life, 'in you,' or ye have not anything in you whereby to support your spiritual life. 'Whoso feedeth on my flesh and maketh my blood his drink, I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed,' not like manna, a mere type of spiritual or heavenly food, 'and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.'

You perceive what is here required, a participation of Christ,—heavenly food which is Christ himself, as once crucified, who has now been glorified. It is not here said that Faith in Christ is the one thing needful, for although it is only by Faith that we can receive Christ, He being only received by the faithful, yet faith is not the bread, but the hand by which we receive the bread. Faith in Christ crucified is the condition required, but the bread of life is the reward conferred upon that faith. Faith is the qualification, but the thing to be sought is the Body and Blood of Christ.

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Such was the instruction which the Apostles had received; and having received their instructions, it is easy to perceive how they would understand our Lord's words when He instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; 'This is my Body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me;' and likewise when He had taken the Cup: 'Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me.'

He had before told them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, and now He appointed the means by which this was to be done. His natural body was visibly before them at the time of the institution, they could not, therefore, have understood Him to mean that this was distributed to them, or that they, in doing as He did hereafter, were to think of doing this; they must also have remembered what our Lord, in the discourse already alluded to, had expressly said, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing;'* they could have regarded the bread and wine thus consecrated merely as instruments, deeds of conveyance, by which, to persons duly qualified, that spiritual sustenance, which is Christ Himself, might be conveyed. This they would understand afterwards more clearly; for when our Lord declared, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth,' He connected the words with an allusion to His ascension: 'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before.'

* St. John vi. 63.

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We may now place the doctrine before you in another point of view. Man's misery consists in his alienation from God. Man can only be restored to happiness by reunion with God. But God cannot come into contact with an unholy thing. Therefore God created for Himself, in the womb of a pure Virgin, a body free from all taint of original corruption, a sinless, spotless body; and the second Person in the Godhead, by assuming this body, became Man also. He did not cease to be God, but He who was God from all eternity became Man, not forming thereby two persons, but in His one Divine Person uniting the two natures. Thus being God and Man, he is the Mediator. It is as Man that He is Flesh and Blood, and it was by becoming Man that He made the Atonement; and it is as Man that we are to approach Him, we are to draw nigh to Him continually, and seek such a union with Him that He may dwell in us and we in Him. But He whom we approach as Man is also God: if then we are one with Him, we are one with God. He thus is the Life of our souls. But how are we thus to unite ourselves to that Man who, being God also, is the Mediator through whom we are brought back unto union with God? When your hearts are prepared by penitence and faith, receive the Bread that is broken and the Cup which is blessed in the Holy Eucharist, and they, though remaining still in their substance bread and wine, shall be to you the deed of conveyance, and virtually, to all intents and purposes, that Body and Blood of Christ which they represent. Christ has now a spiritual Body. It is this Body which profiteth,

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that spiritual Body with which He has ascended; a Body still,—(and we are to bear ever in mind, that it is by being still the Son of Man that He acts as a Mediator), but a spiritual Body, a glorified Body, with qualities very different from that Body which He possessed in the time of His humiliation, as we may see from His intercourse with His disciples after His resurrection, but nevertheless the same Body in which He was crucified. In that Body He now sitteth at the right hand of Glory; but still He, the Lord Jesus, is really present here on earth wherever two or three are assembled in His name; much more therefore really present at this holy ordinance. The sun is placed in the firmament; yet there is a sense in which we say the sun shines upon earth; a sense in which the sun is more present at one time and place than in another. And so can we understand how Christ our Saviour, though sitting at the right hand of God, can be specially present in the Eucharist to convey Himself through the consecrated emblems of His body and blood to the hearts of His faithful people.

When He instituted this blessed sacrament, He anticipated the effects of His ascension, and imparted Himself spiritually to the souls of His Apostles; and spiritually, though really, He has done so, and continues to do so to the faithful ever since.

And hence we see the first great object for which Christians come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Requiring spiritual food, they know that Christ only is that food; He only is the living bread; and they know also that the cup which we bless is the communion of

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the Blood of Christ, and the bread which we break, the communion of the Body of Christ; though it be bread that we eat, consecrated to be the symbol of Christ's Body broken, and though it be of the cup that we drink, yet through means of these, Christ communicates Himself to the souls of the faithful, and the faithful, participate of Christ. There is no transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ; for then they would cease to be symbols, and the whole rite would no longer be sacramental; but as in the things of the world, the patent signed by the sovereign is the instrument by which a peerage is conveyed to a subject qualified to receive it, or as the title deeds are the forms through which an estate is conveyed to a purchaser,—(the illustrations are those of St. Bernard),—so are the consecrated bread and the consecrated cup, the means of conveyance to the soul, prepared by penitence and faith, of that great spiritual gift which in the Holy Sacrament we seek. And he that receives unworthily, incurs an awful penalty in so receiving. Why? Because he has not faith to discern the Lord's Body.

Throughout what has been said you will observe that bread and wine, the Body and Blood, are always united: if we administer the bread, then, without the cup, the ordinance at which we minister may be edifying, but it is no longer that sacrament which Christ our Saviour instituted, and of which the Apostle speaks. I say this in passing, because in the Romish Church, since these things are so, the Holy Eucharist, the gospel ordinance, has ceased to be administered to the body

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of the people; and to the loss of this sacrament may probably, or in part, be traced the gross errors and deceptions, and generally speaking the want of spirituality among the Romanists. In these days, it is necessary to note these things, since ignorance is regarding too often the novelties of Romanism as primitive, and craft is concealing the superior advantages, which we, of a church canonically reformed, possess. The one fact, that it must be doubtful whether the Romish Church administers the holy sacrament at all, except to the clergy, would render communion with Rome a thing to be feared by those who take for their guide the Bible, as understood in the primitive church. But assuredly those persons have no right to complain of their error, who, baptized into a church distinguished from the Romish as in other things so especially in this, that in it the sacraments are duly administered, refuse to partake of this most Holy Sacrament.

I have now considered the first part of our subject; I have shown how the Eucharist is a Sacrament, the means through which we receive a gift from God. I shall commence the second part of my subject by quoting the words of a judicious divine, who has treated fully of this divine ordinance, and has taken of it, perhaps, the lowest view which is consistent with orthodoxy. 'That the Sacrament of the Eucharist,' says Dr. Waterland, 'in whole or in part, in a sense proper or improper, is a sacrifice of the Christian Church, is a point agreed upon among all knowing and sober Divines, Popish, Lutheran, or Reformed.'

Now in what sense it is such it will be my object

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in the remaining portion of this discourse to point out.

When we offer a Sacrifice, I have already stated that a gift is presented unto the Lord; somewhat is offered to God.

Hence the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is a sacrifice; for the death and sufferings of the God-man were offered to God as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; He made His soul an offering for sin; He bare our sins in his own Body on the tree, and he made peace by the Blood of the cross: in one word, Christ appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself, and as it is appointed unto man once to die,—so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.*

You will observe how strongly this is put, how forcibly it is reiterated in Scripture, that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, that we were redeemed by His Blood—made nigh by the Blood of Christ. And in treating of the Eucharist sacrificially, we must, if we would act on the principles of the Church of England, bring the fact prominently forward, that there upon the cross, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, by His one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. At the reformation of our Church, three hundred years ago, the statement of this article of our faith was introduced, parenthetically forced, as it were, into

* Isaiah liii. 5—15. 1 St. Pet. ii. 24. Heb. ix. 27.

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the prayer of consecration, as a kind of warning against a pernicious tenet of the Church of Rome upon this point. And in treating of this subject, since the Church of Rome still retains her false doctrine, we must, however unwilling to touch in the slightest degree upon controversy, just in passing, observe that the Church of England now protests against the notion that there is any repetition or continuation of that one fresh, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, in the Holy Eucharist.

The Romish Divines have taken occasion from the name of sacrifice given to the Eucharist, to tell us of a fresh immolation and death; to attach to it an efficacy of its own, and an independent merit,—an efficacy and merit independent of the one meritorious sacrifice of the Cross; to make men place therein a confidence which cannot but be superstitious, whenever it refers not to the Cross of Christ. And now you see why they adhere so firmly to their false doctrine of transubstantiation; they, in their error, represent themselves as offering up the Son of God substantially and really to the Father. And since they imagine that they do this by offering the consecrated bread and wine, they must maintain that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the very substance of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'This kind of oblation,' says Bishop Ridley, 'standeth upon transubstantiation.' And on this account it was that our Reformers were ready to die at the stake, rather than admit an error fraught with such awful consequences, which indeed virtually sets aside the Cross of Christ. It was not with them, as it has been with

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modern puritans and infidels, a mere question as to the mode of Christ's presence in the Holy Communion: they did not deny the reality of His presence, which would do away with the reality of the sacrament; what they denied was the particular notion of transubstantiation, not on account of any difficulty in believing it, but on account of its virtually setting aside and superseding the fundamental fact of our religion, the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction of the Cross. Both Romanists and Reformers perceived this; on this doctrine really depends that doctrine of the Mass, in which it is supposed that the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is repeated. To deny the doctrine of transubstantiation was virtually, then, to deny the chief peculiarity of the modern Church of Rome, and therefore the Romanists made the acceptance of their figment of transubstantiation a test, for refusing to take which, they sentenced their victims to death. The Reformers of the Church of England admitted the soundness of the reasoning, and therefore, rather than take the test, they died.

The chief reference to the sacrifice of the cross belongs, according to the right doctrine, to the sacramental part of the Eucharist. The sacrifice of the cross is exhibited and represented before God and men, under the symbols of the bread and wine; and the bread and wine being duly consecrated, become to the worthy communicants, to all intents and purposes, virtually and interpretatively, the Body and Blood of that precious Lamb of God who was once, and once for all, offered upon the cross; and by partaking of them we

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become partakers of the one atoning sacrifice. The grand sacrifice once offered is dispensed and communicated to individual believers in the Eucharist, by and through the consecrated symbols: but it is not repeated. Hence the Eucharist is regarded as a Feast upon that great sacrifice.

But while the Scriptures and the Fathers are, like our own Church, strong upon this point, they as frequently speak of other Sacrifices which Christians present as their own Sacrifices, the best they can give to God. It is a Christian privilege to approach God with boldness, to offer Him gifts, and to know that what we humbly offer with faithful and grateful hearts He will graciously vouchsafe to accept. God gives us a property in certain things; what He has given He permits us to regard as our own, and out of what is, in this sense, our own, He permits us to make offerings to Him. Through the one atoning Sacrifice, the death of God our Saviour upon the cross, God is reconciled to man, and man, when justified by his faith in Christ, may draw nigh unto God as to a reconciled Father, who will accept gifts at our hands, not because He needs anything at the hands of His creatures, but because He is pleased by this token of gratitude on the part of His children. As we are pleased by marks of attention and affection on the part of our little ones, so is God well pleased by every indication of love evinced by His babes in Christ. Out of Christ it were presumption to approach God with any such intent: but through Christ we are permitted to bring our gifts, and in offering anything to God we offer a sacrifice.

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Let us proceed to consider, then, what our sacrifices under the gospel are. And here I must premise that the gospel is a spiritual dispensation, and everything we do must have a spiritual reference. Let us take for example alms-deeds as our first way of making a sacrifice to God. A sacrifice is something we do or give to God: Christ our God hath declared that what we do to the poor and afflicted in His name, He will regard as done unto Himself; therefore, the giving of alms is a sacrifice. On this principle, in writing to the Philippians, St. Paul, referring to true liberality towards himself, says, 'I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.'* 'To do good and to communicate forget not,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, adding, 'for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'† It was said even to Cornelius, 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.'‡

It is not the money which is the sacrifice; the money expended in almsgiving, is only the outward and visible sign by which the benevolent feeling is expressed: for money given to the poor grudgingly or of necessity, money for instance, such as the law of the land may require of us for the support of paupers, could never be regarded by anyone in this point of view. It must be a freewill offering; and although, where the benevolent feeling is, benevolent actions must be the result, we do not always conclude that,

* Phil. iv. 10. † Heb. xiii. 16. ‡ Acts x. 5.

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because a poor person is relieved, there must be generous feeling in him that administers the relief—other motives may give rise to the action. The real offering, then, to God is internal, spiritual: He accepts the deed, when the deed is done from the benevolent sentiment, which benevolent sentiment is the real offering.

And thus we see how in one way, at least, we can offer sacrifices acceptable to God.

From the Book of Revelation we learn that through the intercession of Christ, the prayers of the saints go up as an odour before God—the prayers of the saints ascend before God as the smoke of the incense.* According to the Prophecy of Malachi, 'From the rising up of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name with a pure offering.'† All these are sacrificial terms, and denote, that, over and above the fact that prayer is the means by which we tell to our Heavenly Father our wants and ask for redress,—prayer is to be regarded in the light of a sacrifice. This is more apparent in praise and thanksgiving; for prayer has reference to ourselves, but praise and thanksgiving is a direct offering to God. Therefore saith the Apostle, 'let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.'‡ Under this head comes our text particularly, although I apply it to the whole subject, 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual

* Rev. v. 8. † Malachi i. 2. ‡ Heb. xiii. 15.

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sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' He i alluding here to the continual offering up of praise, which is the great employment of the Church. Again, the dedication of a contrite heart, sanctified by grace, is another offering which God will accept, for, in reference to the new covenant especially, the Holy Ghost saith, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'* Another Gospel sacrifice is the sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies, 'I beseech you,' saith St. Paul to the Romans, 'that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' †

Without entering further into detail, you see what we can do if we would offer sacrifices to God,—and all these sacrifices the communicant offers, when he takes part in the service of the Holy Eucharist. Alms are presented to God for the use of His poor: and as God is about to feast His people at His own table, by conveying an inward and spiritual grace through the outward and visible signs, an oblation is made to Him of bread and wine, to be consecrated for this purpose. These are visible indications on the part of the Church, of the readiness of God's people to do all that is requisite and necessary, as far as in them lies, for the relief of the distressed, and the establishment of true religion. We offer also our praises and thanksgivings, pleading the merits of Christ our Saviour; and the priest, standing at the altar, in our name, offers our services to

* Psalm xli. 17. † Romans xii. 1.

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Almighty God, throughout the whole office, in effect, and in one place in these most solemn words; 'And here,'—even at Thy table, thus becoming an altar,—'here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto Thee.'

Well then may a service which combines all kinds of Christian sacrifices be denominated, as it was in the first ages of the church, and still is, the great sacrifice of the Christian Church. But we may proceed yet further; it is the sacrifice of faith, and hope, and self-humiliation in commemorating the great sacrifice of the cross, and resting entirely upon it for all its efficacy: it is also the offering up by your pastor of true converts and sincere penitents, brought to God by his instrumentality,—a most affecting thought, on which St. Paul dwells more than once.* It is this—but it is more than this; 'for we,' saith the Apostle, in reference to this holy ordinance, 'being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' The blessed Eucharist, therefore, is not merely the offering to God of this or that individual person, is not merely the offering to God of one single congregation; it is the presenting to God, as prepared to do, or to endure whatever He may see fit to appoint, the whole mystical body of Christ, Christ and His members; the Church militant and the Church triumphant, with their divine Head. 'Thou, O God,' we seem to say, 'didst give thine only begotten Son for the salvation of the

* Romans xv. 16; Philipp. ii. 17; compare Isaiah lvi. 20.

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world; out of the world He has gathered His Church; and behold, the whole Church, visible and invisible, militant and triumphant, with Christ the Head of the Church, in that He is man as well as God, standeth before the throne of glory, ready, like the hosts of heaven, to do Thy will. Thou hast sacrificed Thyself for us, Thou hast given us grace to make an offering to Thee,—behold it, even all we have and all we are.'

How glorious, how sublime; how overwhelmingly grand is the view thus taken of the distinguishing rite of Christian worship!

The one sacrifice of our God, once made upon the cross, gratefully commemorated, and in a figure exhibited before God, and men, and angels, as our only hope of salvation; that one sacrifice applied to faithful hearts, so that they themselves may have grace to offer their spiritual sacrifices; and the whole service a peace-offering, a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the King of kings and Lord of lords!

But what the Church is to be and do as a whole, each member of the Church is to be and to do in himself,—as the Church, the mystical body of Christ, is devoted to God, so must each component part of that body be; or in the blessings vouchsafed to the body he can have no share.

Observe—unless you bear your part in this service, in the Holy Communion, you disobey Christ, and disobedient Christians forfeit the grace they once received; and yet in this service you cannot really take a part, unless you are prepared to offer yourself, your soul, and your body, a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice

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unto God. The *almost* Christian may not indeed approach this holy ordinance,—but will the *almost* Christian be saved at the last day? Answer this question at home and on your knees.

But you are unworthy to offer any sacrifice to God? And who is not unworthy? we can only receive this Holy Sacrament worthily by acknowledging, as we do in the communion office, that we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under the Lord's table. We must not confound our being unworthy to approach the Lord, with our receiving the Holy Communion unworthily; for the two things are quite distinct. When we speak of receiving unworthily, we refer to the motive with which we receive the object which we have in view. We are to receive the Holy Communion in obedience to our Lord's command, and in order to obtain a spiritual blessing. If we approach the holy ordinance without regard to the divine commandment, and with a worldly, instead of a spiritual object, then we receive unworthily.

Some years ago, it was necessary for every person holding office under the government, to be professedly a member of the Church of England: made a member of the Church at Baptism, he could only prove that he continued to be a member of the same, by his receiving the holy communion: to be a communicant, therefore, was a necessary qualification for office. We can easily imagine what might take place under such circumstances, viz.:—that men with infidel hearts, neither caring for Christ's commandment, nor seeking a spiritual gift, would come to the holy communion, merely to

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qualify themselves for some worldly appointment. This was to receive unworthily.

In some places, the alms collected at the offertory are distributed among the communicants immediately after the service. We can here again imagine poor persons to attend, not out of respect to the command, or with a view to the divine blessing, but to have a share in the alms:—this too would be to receive unworthily.

A parent sometimes urges a son to receive the blessed Sacrament: that son is living in the habit of some known sin, but to oblige his parent, presents himself at the altar, his object being not to seek the grace, to the reception of which his sin is an impediment, but to win his parent's favour, or to prevent his supposing that he is guilty of an offence which he desires to conceal:—this again would be to receive unworthily.

These illustrations will serve to show what is meant by receiving unworthily, and will enable you to see that no one who, having been baptized into Christ, truly repents and unfeignedly believes the holy gospel, can receive unworthily, however conscious of unworthiness he may be,—if he has recourse to the Holy Eucharist in obedience to Christ's commandment and to seek a blessing to his soul.

What is requisite in everyone is, first that he shall have been admitted into Christ's Church, by holy Baptism; for this ordinance, the blessed Eucharist, belongs exclusively to Christians; secondly, that he believes all the articles of the Christian faith; and thirdly, that he is leading a moral life. Without faith we cannot receive

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the blessing, and an immoral life would repel the blessing when offered: without faith we are as a man would be, to whom food is offered when, in the paroxysm of disease, he is unable to open his mouth to receive it; if leading an immoral life, we should be, as a man whose diseased stomach would nauseate the viands presented to it, however wholesome in themselves.

It is necessary to mention this, since people sometimes are induced to disobey their Saviour, because they conceive that some qualifications relating to their internal feelings are necessary. Fervent and glowing feelings are a blessing, and, when accompanied by consistent conduct, a blessing direct from God: but even to His most favoured servants, God does not at all times vouchsafe the blesssing of fervour: and though fervour be a blessing much to be desired, it is never to be used as the test of our religious condition. We are to judge of our spiritual state by our works. Are we morally correct? If you make any molten image to worship it, according to what is stated in the Commination Service, you are cursed, and therefore you are not in a condition to communicate; the same is to be said of him who curseth father or mother, or who removeth his neighbour's land-mark; of him who maketh the blind to go out of his way, or perverteth the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow; of him who smiteth his neighbour secretly, or committeth adultery; who taketh reward to slay the innocent, or putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord. All these curses relate, you will observe, to moral offences; and who are they

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whom the express words of the Church warn not to come to the Holy Communion? 'If any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of His word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or any other grievous crime, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table.'

If you are blasphemers or adulterers, or in envy, hatred, or malice, or any other grievous crime, you cannot love the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore you cannot, on a principle of love, obey his Commandment, and consequently you cannot properly receive the Holy Sacrament, and it is better not to receive it at all. But if you are not blasphemers nor adulterers, if you are not living in envy, hatred, malice, or any other grievous crime; then what hinders you from keeping the commandment of God, the last affectionate injunction of your God, just before He laid down His life upon the cross for your sins? If you are seeking to avoid other sins, seek to avoid this sin also, for 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.'* All fears on the part of baptized persons, who are not leading immoral lives, are very sinful; all such fears as shall prevent them from doing what their Saviour has required them to do,—for such fears indicate a want of faith. Will you not trust that Blessed Person who said, 'This do in remembrance of me'? Do you think that the Lord Jesus who died for your sins, would institute an ordinance and command its observance, not to a chosen few, but to all His followers, if there were danger to your souls in obeying? Your

* St. James ii. 10.

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souls are in danger for not obeying,—in obedience there is safety.

'It is a solemn thing to receive the Holy Sacrament,' you will say, and God forbid that any should partake of the ordinance without admitting that it is a most solemn thing. Cherish this feeling; it is a right feeling; but if the thought of its being a solemn thing be carried so far as to prevent your obeying your Saviour and your God, then, that thought of yours, that it is a solemn thing, becomes a sinful thought, and must be overcome. A religious scruple, founded though it may be on a right feeling of reverence and fear to offend, if it be indulged so as to weaken the willing spirit of obedience, becomes sinful. It is a solemn thing to receive the Holy Communion, but the ordinance was appointed by a loving Saviour,—and that same Saviour, perfect man as well as perfect God, who died for your sins, rose again for your justification, and is even now at the right hand of Power interceding for you.

You are unworthy, but you are believers in Him; and by your faith you are justified, when with honest and true hearts you draw near to your heavenly Father in this or in any other ordinance. You are doing what only holy creatures are qualified to do; you are conscious that there is sin even in your holy things; but you are believers in Christ, and therefore God will impute holiness to you. Your faith will be accounted for righteousness. You shall be for Christ's sake accounted righteous, that, approaching God through the appointed means, you may partake more largely of the Spirit of Christ, and so in the Lord become really

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righteous. It is thus that justification by faith, properly understood, is intended to prepare the way for sanctification.

Be this, then, the position of our souls, when we draw nigh unto God in the holy sacrament,—I am unworthy to do this great thing, but by my faith I continue to be what I was made at my baptism, a living member of Christ; and to me, as such, drawing nigh unto God, God will Himself draw nigh, permitting me to act in this regard as if I were already what I am gradually becoming, a righteous creature, and imparting to me the grace, which in this blessed sacrament I seek, in such a degree as my soul is prepared to receive it.

Cling by faith to Jesus, and then fear not. He who instituted this ordinance, He, the loving Saviour, the God made man to be our Mediator, He the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, ever liveth to make intercession for us,—He who gave the commandment 'This do in remembrance of me,' dwelleth in us, except we be reprobates. He is a God at hand, not a God afar off; and He will protect us, and guide us, and guard us, and bless us, wherever, and under whatever circumstances we seek to obey Him; He will come to us, through His sacrament, and when we are one with Him, we may offer a sacrifice acceptable to God, ourselves, our souls, and our bodies, all we have and all we are.

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